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HAVE WE LOST OUR WAY?

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BY

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TO

DR. JOHN A. HUTTON

QUITE AN OLD

FRIEND NOW

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I THE NEW WORLD

THOSE who have been alive for the last twenty years have had an extraordinary experience, for they have seen changes so momentous and shattering in habits, conventions and general methods of living that they almost amount to a social revolution. Nearly all the sweeping changes that have taken place are hostile to the maintenance of home life and religious progress, and in the upheaval many good things have gone down. With the world-shaking conflict of 1914–18 the old civilisation came to an end—disappeared completely and for ever—so that the disciplined living and economic security of the nineteenth century now seem incredibly remote. The world has now to face the burdensome and exacting task of building a new and better civilisation, and so far it is not making any appreciable progress.

We are living in a new world, a world so small that a rustic labourer in an obscure village can listen to a speech or a song that is wirelessed right round it. We marvel, and with good reason, at the amazing scientific and mechanical inventions of this new age; but is there any really great man in the world to-day? With the solitary—and perhaps doubtful—exception of Woodrow Wilson the War threw up no outstanding personality, although it must have massacred many a potential genius. Is there one great preacher in this country to-day, or one great statesman, or one great poet? There have been no giants in literature since Thomas Hardy; and I have heard his work denounced from a Nonconformist pulpit. Having no brilliant genius to lead us in a perplexing and disquieting period we have invented a new kind of biography which exposes the weaknesses and castigates the faults of the great figures of the nineteenth century. "The past, at least, is secure," said Daniel Webster. He never made a greater mistake. Most of our heroes have been dragged off their pedestals and rolled in the dust. One of the bitterest

tragedies of the War was that at its close there was no one big enough to lead the world into reconciliation, restore its moral standards and re-establish its economic stability. Now we are not only back where we were before the War, we are much worse off, for we have destroyed the youth of one generation and lost all moral influence over the youth of to-day. Some people thought we were going to emerge from the War purified and uplifted, but we came out clinging precariously to tangled faiths and tattered conventions.

When we are deploring some of the discouraging and menacing symptoms of this new, restless and impatient world, we must remember that the nineteenth century was by no means a golden age of moral progress and spiritual idealism. It defaced England with the smoke and soot and sullen squalor of a drab and depressing industrialism. It was a century that cared very little for architecture, poetry or music. It was naïve and easygoing and not at all inquisitive about life. It aimed at wealth, population, comfort and security. It was acquisitive, possessive,

self-righteous, contemptuous of foreigners, oblivious of social injustice. We had the callous, calculating dogmas of the Manchester School, which, as someone has said, made cotton cloth cheap and toiling men cheaper still. We had the degrading servitude of factories. We had ugly houses, hideous towns, stuffy homes, heavy and repulsive furniture. It was an age of immoral cheapness and merciless sweating. It was a smug, prosaic age of dullness and complacent self-satisfaction, and its humour was heavy and pedestrian. Mr. Galsworthy says that it was "an era which had canonised hypocrisy so that to seem to be respectable was to be."

Yet I doubt whether the materialism of the end of the last century was as crude and cynical as that which afflicts us to-day. We have jumped out of an intolerable frying-pan into an uncontrollable fire. Our Press at that time had some dignity and idealism, whereas to-day it is almost entirely commercialised and irresponsible—its ear to the ground and its eye on the big advertisers. It is true that we have seen startling signs of a new

distribution of wealth. We have seen a marquis move out of his London mansion and a draper move in. We have seen great country estates pass into the hands of war profiteers. Those who travel observe on trains and ships and in hotels vast numbers of new and inexperienced travellers. They have a great deal of money, and they have not had it long. But it is more than doubtful whether we have gained anything by the transfer of wealth from the old nobility to the quick-witted speculator.

Industrialism has produced a very harsh, untidy and money-ridden world. If the people of this country were confronted to-day with the alternative of serving God or mammon the vast majority would unhesitatingly choose mammon. It becomes increasingly clear that if our churches wish to bring about a recovery of Christianity they will be compelled to fight mammon with greater vigour and dexterity. And this is the one thing they are not even attempting. The successful merchant is not honoured and revered by the world nearly as much as in the nineteenth century, but he is still exalted by the Church. You will not

find many poor laymen occupying positions of honour in the denominational Unions. And with few exceptions the wealthy industrialists who are placed on committees and in presidential chairs are not put there by reason of special intellectual achievement or unusual gifts of spiritual leadership but chiefly as the result of money power. Religious institutions too often make the mistake of supposing that because a man can build a business or accumulate a fortune he is a competent thinker who can direct policy and inspire enthusiasm. A Church that depends on big business for sustenance, and exalts capitalists in order to get it, is in this new world doomed to ethical sterility and social impotence. Religion must control the whole of life or none of it. It must judge the secular world and not fawn upon it. It should exercise a spiritual sovereignty over politics, education, business, pleasure—indeed over every area of human interest and activity.

Even in a period of crashing, sensational changes nothing has been more striking than the progress of the new women. Not only

have they secured the vote and got into Parliament, they are pushing their way into the professions and commanding high salaries in business. They are competing with men, and so far as I can see men are accepting the position feebly and lying down. The attempt to restrict the number of women at Oxford was merely a confession of pitiful weakness. "Women are such beastly grinds," said an undergraduate, "that the standards of examinations are going up." The new women appear to have more vitality and energy and driving force than the modern young men. Is it possible that as girls become more boyish and athletic young men are becoming more effeminate? An experienced Oxford cricketer declares that he is amazed at the slackness of present-day youths. In his day—before the War—no captain would have allowed his men to go about to dances and parties just before the match, as they do now.

There are new relations between the sexes to-day, and no one can deny that the modern girl is entirely different from her predecessors. She is a cool, uncompromising realist with a

frankness that is embarrassing to those who have not discarded the prim and circumspect speech of pre-war days. With a rather blustering carelessness she takes chances and tries short cuts to happiness. She is sick of being put upon a pedestal to be worshipped, and she has decided to come down and work and play and have some fun. At the end of the nineteenth century young ladies were at great pains to conceal their ankles, and they were imprisoned in whalebone and heavy voluminous petticoats. The modern girl is lightly attired in a loose one-piece frock, and she exhibits her knees to an utterly indifferent world. An old Scottish preacher in a recent sermon said that when he was young women could sit down on their hair—"now," he exclaimed, "they can't sit down on their skirts!" Women have not only transformed their dress, they have also changed their faces by means of the lip-stick, the rouge-pot and the powder-puff. The mind of the new girl seems to have hardened somewhat; she has cultivated slimness to such an extent that Edith Wharton, the American novelist, describes her as "a stripped skeleton"; and as

for her soul, I confess I am not quite clear about it. The fact is that the new generation is not worried about its soul or even conscious of its sins. Twenty or thirty years ago the girl who worked for her living was an object of pity, and she had to face a certain amount of social disapproval. People used to say, " Poor dear, she has got to go out and work." Now they say, " Lucky girl, she's got a job." Once the working girl received compassion and sympathy, now she achieves envy and prestige. Then business life was a tragic necessity, now it is a glorious opportunity. The girls of to-day are cool, brave and resourceful. They do not double up at the first disappointment, they do not run away.

This changing world in which we are now living is very puzzling and disconcerting ; for it has broken loose from its moorings, and religion and morality are crumbling. It has new and more tolerant ethical standards. Regarding sex it is candid and unafraid. It is out for material conquest and unrestricted pleasure. Victorian prejudices have been discarded like threadbare garments. There is a

new impatience of restraint, a new independence of control, a new indifference to organised religion, a new disregard for the consequences of our behaviour. We used to sneer at France on account of its low birth rate; now our own birth rate is lower than that of France. Not so long ago it was thirty-six per 1,000; it has already dropped to sixteen, and birth control will carry it lower. There is a car in the garage to-day, but there is no baby in the nursery. We have got rid of some of the diseases produced by the old civilisation, but there are new and perilous sicknesses resulting from the new. Children are happier but prematurely sophisticated. The Sabbath is secularised almost out of existence, and Sunday papers are found in nearly every home. There are few Christian households that have not been invaded by the insane passion for dancing. Nothing pre-war is very much in demand except pre-war whisky. We are still disgraced by the crooked and intricate squalor of overcrowded slums, and in London alone 150,000 families have to live in one room. The old restraints have been abandoned, but the rebels are not rejoicing in their freedom. You have

a grinning, feverish, despairing world and a lethargic, uncertain, divided Church. The old evangelical preachers used to say, "Without Christ you are lost." They were right, we are.

II MARRIAGE AND MORALITY

THE young men and women of this new age have been making a critical investigation of marriage and have come to the conclusion that it is a very serious thing to promise to live with anybody until death ends the contract. They believe that such an undertaking is so precarious that it ought to be approached with less emotional disturbance and more coolness and caution. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that every year sees a rise in the age at which people marry. This means that the new generation will be born of older parents, which cannot be a very good thing. It is true that the older people are prolonging their youth and that grandmothers who in the nineteenth century would have been expected to have one foot in the grave now have two feet on a ball-room floor or on a mountain road. But although doctors tell us that there is little

or no evidence to prove that children of older parents are inferior, there is plenty of evidence to show that motherhood becomes more difficult and perilous with advancing years. Deaths in childbirth have increased in the last three years from 3·9 per 1,000 to 4·1 per 1,000.

Although marriage is now postponed to an age when the partners might be expected to make a cool, wise choice, it cannot be said that modern marriages are any more successful than they were in former days. Indeed they appear to be more fragile than ever. The new law prohibiting the publication of detailed reports of divorce cases has removed the fear of embarrassing publicity and has largely increased divorce—so much so that the Lord Chief Justice recently suggested that in order to save time it might be necessary to try such cases in batches. We have now six times as many divorces as we had twenty years ago. In America there is one divorce to every six marriages. There is a fear to-day of the permanence and finality of marriage. It is too big a leap—it lasts too long—it demands too much. The new generation wants a safe line of retreat in case it makes a mistake.

One of the characters in Mr. Galsworthy's "To Let" says: "Marriage without a decent chance of relief is only a sort of slave-owning; people oughtn't to own each other. Everyone sees that now."

In our vexed and sophisticated society marriage must, of course, become increasingly difficult. It is often a tangle of discords, misunderstandings and half-smothered irritations. Have you ever seen a married couple deliberately and firmly "being kind" to each other? If you have watched the devastating process you know how kindness that is not spontaneous can become a grievous affliction very hard to bear. Marriage is the most precarious of relationships, and cannot be dealt with by cold, convincing logic. Love is often vagrant and incalculable and is not easily imprisoned in dutiful domesticity. Men and women nearly always demand too much. They erect lofty, romantic, impossible ideals and expect their partners to conform to them. It is perfectly miraculous that marriage turns out as well as it does. Whatever we may think of marriage as an institution, it is a well-known historical fact that as society has

become civilised it has also become monogamous, and that the introduction of the loose unions and less rigorous customs so prevalent in this country to-day has always marked a decline of civilisation. Human development has invariably led to an indissoluble monogamy.

Girls used to go from dull stuffy homes into the freedom and adventure of marriage, and the change was generally exhilarating and satisfying. They settled down comfortably to a more interesting, less repressive and much happier life. But to-day they exchange business life with its excitement and comradeship for a bandbox of a house or " a two-roomed flat with kitchenette " where all their household duties can be performed in a couple of hours —and then they are bored. They have time to brood, time to remember, time to wonder. They miss their plentiful pocket-money, the dances, the week-ends, the evenings in restaurants and theatres with parties of lively companions. The young husband wants to get on with his work—the young wife wants to get on with her pleasures. Now boredom seems a trivial and silly complaint that might be easily avoided or cured, but the fact remains

that more sinners get into mischief through the nausea of boredom than from any other cause.

Sometimes the young wife goes on with her job and for a time this purse-partnership works well enough. But the question of children has to be dealt with rather furtively and unsatisfactorily, and it often happens that the wife earns more than her husband, and this very easily creates discord. She, clever creature, goes blazing ahead—he sticks in his drab clerkship with little hope of promotion. She is disappointed with a husband who remains in a lowly rut—he resents the fact that his wife can apparently take care of herself better than he can take care of her.

It is astonishing what fools men can be where women are concerned. Men who in business are shrewd and clever often show an utter lack of taste and intelligence when choosing a wife. I sometimes meet old maids who possess every qualification that would fit them for marriage, and yet men have blindly passed them by and have been caught by the transparent tricks of exacting, extravagant flappers. I see a girl who is bright,

pretty, interesting, thrifty and industrious—there, I exclaim, is a perfect wife for a man! But the men don't see it; they prefer to saddle themselves with painted fools of whom they will get dead tired in six months. No marriage can be permanently successful that is founded on an evaporating passion. Marriage must be much more than a mere physical attraction or it is bound to fail. Sex must never be allowed to become the centre of the life, a tyranny over the soul. But when two Christian people are steadfastly mated on a basis of loyal partnership their union can never come to an abject collapse. They will be generous, large-hearted, trustful; never whining, grudging nor analytical. Real love is an enduring flame and an indissoluble bond. Life has its difficult duties, its tormenting disappointments, its hampering limitations, and they are more easily endured when they are shared. A radiant comradeship brings to both partners a new accession of strength, a divine beauty of mutual understanding. But if one partner is bloodless, unimaginative and invertebrate and the other fiercely energetic and desperately adventurous—then with such

divisive differences of temper and character it may be better to separate.

No modern movement has had a greater effect on marriage and morals than birth control—the discussion of which is everywhere quite free and unfettered. It used to be said that when God sent a mouth He sent the food to fill it. No one believes that now and no one is prepared to act upon it. The limitation of the family is a generally accepted fact, and we already see the result in the rapid fall in the birth rate. If the birth rate of fifty years ago prevailed in Europe to-day there would be two and a half million more babies born in the year. The British birth rate is now the lowest in Europe with the exception of the Swedish. In 1920, 957,000 babies were born in England and Wales. In 1926, with a larger number of parents of suitable age, only 694,000 were born. The drop in six years was one of 263,000 births, or over 27 per cent. The birth rate of the better educated classes in France is 30 per cent. above that of the corresponding groups in England. In the schools of London there are over 100,000 fewer children than in 1915.

Birth control now amounts to an obsession with many women. In 1926 and 1927 the women of the Liberal and Labour parties passed resolutions on the subject in spite of the opposition of their party leaders. The tragic side of the birth control movement is that the widespread knowledge of methods of contraception has led to much immorality amongst unmarried young men and women. Roman Catholicism is definitely opposed to birth control, but Protestantism is neutral—because to-day Protestantism takes up no decided attitude to anything.

The morality of English society has been dangerously lowered and poisoned by an increasing number of frenzied and hectic novels dealing with adultery, moral revolt and sex upheaval. The peril of many of these modern novels is not that they deal with sin—novelists have always done that; indeed novelists are more ready to face the fact of sin than preachers—but that they are saturated with sex and that they treat sin as if it did not matter and led to no serious or painful consequences. Young people cannot be prevented from reading such books—and the reason is quite

obvious. They like to read in fiction about the sort of things they themselves are unlikely to do. Society has set up barriers, and youth wants to know what happens when they are swept away. A literary critic points out that over every act of Dickens's characters there hangs a clear moral judgment, whereas, in comparison, Arnold Bennett is utterly unprincipled, his morality being not an affair of principles but purely a morality of sympathetic feeling. There is, of course, plenty of healthy fiction, but the misfortune is that many clean novels have nothing to recommend them but their cleanliness—they are often stupid, illiterate and far removed from the realities of life.

The world, I fear, is in a sorry tangle. No one can move about England with his eyes open without becoming aware of a cheap and flashy vulgarity which certainly was not so open and unashamed a few years ago. You see it in the Press, in the films and on the stage, and it seems to go unchallenged and unrebuked, for even religion has surrendered some of its austerities and many of its prohibitions. Sex mania and sex perversion are

to-day far too prevalent. There is a new and elastic tolerance and almost any laxity is condoned. You can go very far without bearing the stigma of depravity. A few years ago if a man was divorced he would, for a time, keep very quiet and lie very low. What he had done was considered to be at least rather discreditable. To-day quite eminent men are divorced and marry divorced women and no one thinks any the worse of them. They readjust their households, but their social relations are quite undisturbed. I am not expressing any opinion about this—I am merely stating a well-known and a very significant fact.

The disintegrating influences of the War have changed our habits, shaken our institutions and threatened the distinctive morality of the Christian Gospel. It may be that some day the people of this country will return to the old beliefs that their fathers and forefathers lived by.

III THE NEW YOUTH

More than thirty years ago I saw Ibsen's gripping, provoking, unforgettable play, "The Master Builder," the theme and motive of which was that youth was knocking at the door. In those far-away days it sounded like a rash and daring prophecy of a new and rather unlikely era. But youth is not knocking at the door now—it is inside, kicking up the ancient dust and demanding with challenging audacity the reorganisation of the whole muddled household. The cocksure mutineers, strident and assertive, have got their way and claimed their freedom, and they frolic about at their own sweet will, laughing at inhibitions and tearing conventions in tatters. They will have nothing to do with hypocritical evasions. They have smashed through all the barriers labelled authority and tradition. There are no more shy, sedate, shrinking

maidens, waiting at home—timorous and rather crushed—until a husband comes along.

It is impossible to deny that in the old safe dowdy days youth lived a rather bleak and shrivelled and impoverished life. They were tediously chaperoned, they endured drowsy stagnation, suffocating limitations and sometimes emotional starvation. Religion often consisted of joyless negations, and the Church made the mistake of identifying impulses toward beauty and romance with sin. Consequently, an innocent amusement became a gesture of defiance. Tell a girl that she must be in at ten o'clock, and although she has nothing to keep her out after that hour she immediately has a desperate longing to come in at eleven. This is perfectly natural and understandable. Personally, I don't care twopence about the Pope, but I always defend him when I hear angry Protestants run him down.

Whatever may be said in condemnation of the young people of the new generation we must admit that they are clear-eyed realists with less pretence and make-believe than their elders. And this is an enormous advantage

as regards the relations between the sexes. Whereas years ago girls were easily taken in and carried away by the plausible and flattering love-making of wasters and deceivers, they now know enough to make them critical and understanding. They know a rotter when they see one. They are cool and self-possessed. They master difficulties instead of dodging them. They probe and challenge everything, they despise sentiment, they are amused by rhetoric. The other day a man bought a first edition of one of Tennyson's works for sixpence. "Oh, yes," said the bookseller, "it's a first edition all right, but that's all it's worth. Tennyson's gone beat—there's no demand for him any more." I told a modern youth about this, and he listened with gusty hilarity. "Wasn't he the bloke who said 'Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do and die'?" he asked. "Well, that stuff certainly is out of date. We're going to 'reason why' a good deal in the future."

Youth has very largely deserted the churches, alienated by their rigid dogmas and ancient creeds and stale traditions. Here I cannot withhold from them a certain amount of

sympathy, for I think the churches might have offered them a warmer and more tolerant hospitality and thus have retained what they so much need to-day, the radiant glamour and untamed audacity of youth. "There is now," said Dr. Jowett two years before his death, "widespread unrest and confusion. Our young people do not know where they are. They are in the bonds of antique methods and conceptions. Much of their bondage would be released by more candid and fearless dealing with their difficulties." Abraham Lincoln never joined a Church for the simple reason that he could never find one that did not demand the acceptance of cut and dried dogmas and cast-iron creeds, and he refused to be enclosed in a theological strait-jacket. "When any Church," said Lincoln, "will inscribe over its altar as its sole qualification for membership the Saviour's condensed statement of both law and gospel, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself,' that Church shall I join with all my heart and soul." His wife in a curious phrase—but one which it is quite

easy to understand—said that he was not " a technical Christian." I know a lot of people who look to me remarkably like saints, but they are not " technical Christians," and it is entirely the fault of the Church that they are not.

I have never been able to see why man-made creeds should be regarded as fixed, sacred and unchallengeable. They were made a very long time ago by men who were human like the rest of us, and the good men of this present age have just as much right to make new creeds that would be more acceptable to the modern mind with its increased knowledge and experience. Jesus never knew anything about the creeds that are used in His Churches to-day. He never saw them or approved of them or authorised them. He accepted no labels and tolerated no barriers. Nothing would seem so unorthodox to Jesus as belligerent orthodoxy. It would make no difference to Him to-day whether a man called himself a Congregationalist or a Roman Catholic, for He numbers both amongst His friends. All He wants to know is whether we are living a life controlled by the spirit

of love and brotherhood. Religion does not consist in dogmas and traditions, but in a vital individual experience.

Ministers and teachers who have to do with modern youth discover that what primarily attracts young men and women to the Christian Gospel is the Personality of Jesus. They are not interested in doctrines and they regard the old creeds as unintelligible and outworn. Words like "justification," "reconciliation," "adoption" and even "salvation" convey little or no meaning to their minds. But they are attracted, fascinated, gripped by the life and teaching of Jesus. They are surprised when ministers read two lessons, one from the Old Testament as well as one from the New, because they do not regard them as of equal value and importance. They are not personally troubled about sin, and apparently feel that confession of sin is conventional and insincere. They are appalled at the attitude of the Church to war. When a well-known preacher recently described war as "fratricide" —which, of course, it is—many young men and women inquired whether he knew it was "fratricide" in August, 1914, and if so, why

did he bless and support "fratricide" for four ghastly years? Frequently I have heard young people ask why there are not intervals of silence in the services of the Church. "Why must the man keep on talking all the time?" they ask. "Why can't he stop and give us an opportunity to think and pray our own urgent little prayers?" My experience is that young business women seldom go to church at all. They are not irreligious, but they think that modern preaching lacks courage and vitality.

"And as he was troubled thereabout," says Bunyan, "he espied two men come tumbling over the wall on the left hand of the narrow way; and they made up apace to him . . . they drew up unto him, who thus entered with them into discourse. . . . 'Why came you not in at the gate which standeth at the beginning of the way?'" It may be that the Church has been too hard and unyielding in its insistence on the wicket gate "at the beginning of the way." Anyhow, young people are moving away from authority towards experience, and are inclined to reach the narrow way by "tumbling over the wall

on the left hand." Is the Church going to be stiff and hostile about it?

Although we hear so much about the revolt of youth, there is a sense in which the young are too timid and diffident, for they seem to shrink from the shouldering of responsibility. They do nothing to justify their revolt. They complain about a topsy-turvy world and point the finger of scorn at tottering and badly managed institutions, but they lack the courage and initiative to take a hand in putting things straight. Especially is this true of the young men of the new generation, who often seem to me to be rather effeminate and spineless slackers with a fear of decisive action and little grip or tenacity. I meet too many youths lounging about in London and living on their fathers. Some of them tell me that they write—they do; they write home for money. We want more critics and more agitators—more young men with blazing indignation against social wrongs and a fiery purpose to create a healthier, happier society. Someone has said that the essential function of the young man in politics, religion and the arts is to make a complete nuisance of himself.

I notice with real satisfaction a new spirit of independence among the younger Nonconformist ministers, who twice within a few months have, in great assemblies, stubbornly resisted the cautious opportunism of the leaders on the platform and triumphantly got their way.

I confess that I like the modern girl. I admire her healthy, sensible way of dressing. I am disarmed by her impudent boyish grin; I like her restless, inquiring mind, although she sometimes talks with a minimum of tact and a maximum of exaggeration; I find her kind and fair and magnanimous, and she seems to me to have much more robust vitality than her brothers and a great deal more sense than her predecessors of twenty years ago. I like the unflinching courage with which she meets the demands and difficulties of this new world. She looks forward rather wistfully to the years ahead, for after forty or forty-five a woman has not much chance in the modern business world, and the man who might have married her and taken care of her lies dead in a French grave. Only callous fools laugh at old maids to-day.

But if our new youth is generally healthy and sensible—there are others. There are the languid, voluptuous creatures of night clubs—greedy, lazy, self-indulgent—caring for nothing but flaming thrills and heated, tiring pleasures. There are the foolish rebels who call chastity frustration and repression, and claim that there is no harm in obeying natural impulses. They strut on the edge of a volcano. They do not see that freedom from the restraints which civilisation has imposed is followed by the most exacting penalties. "Whoso breaketh through a fence, a serpent shall bite him." They sing:

> "I shall go my ways, tread out my measure,
> Fill the days of my daily breath
> With fugitive things not good to treasure,
> Do as the world doth, say as it saith."

They pretend to be proudly defiant, but they are not free from dreary misgivings, and are often apprehensive about the future. They have no serene contentment—only a hectic excitement or a numbing disillusion. They have such a lot to learn about life, and they are so pathetically certain that they know it all. They have been grossly misled by some

of the unhealthy fiction on which they feast their immature minds. One novel in particular must have given many young girls a wickedly distorted view of life. A girl in an office goes to the South of France with her elderly employer, and revels in the dazzling luxury of an expensive hotel. The man gets pneumonia, and, before his death, sends for his solicitor, marries the girl, and makes a will leaving her his fortune, his house and his business. She returns to London a wealthy widow, and at the close of the book is enjoying herself in a West End store, spending a great deal of money on a layette for her expected baby. Now the author—a competent, experienced and successful writer—knows the world very thoroughly, and he knows perfectly well that life does not work out like that. One of his reviewers pointed out that you can find girls like his heroine any morning at Bow Street Police Court crying in the dock.

IV SOCIAL HABITS AND HOME LIFE

THE disruption of family life which has alarmed so many serious people during the last few years is very easily explained. To the homes of England have come the Sunday paper, the telephone, the gramophone, the radio, dancing, theatre-going, the movies and the automobile. Life has become therefore more expansive but more shallow; more exciting but less satisfying; more tolerant but more risky. No longer do the young people stay at home in the evenings—even the radio fails to keep them indoors. They hate the prim orderliness of home life. They don't want rest—they want zest. In the summer they go off motoring or to play tennis. In the winter they dance or go to the theatre or the movies. They cannot settle down quietly to read—they have an irresistible urge to rush off somewhere

in a frantic search for thrills and sensations. I have seen a father looking at his daughter with wondering, frightened eyes. She was his child and lived in the same house with him, but they were complete strangers. She went her own way and told him nothing. It used to be said that in Germany everything was forbidden that was not permitted, while in England everything was permitted that was not forbidden. We may now say that in the English home everything is permitted that is forbidden.

The Sabbath has been almost completely secularised. There are hundreds of thousands of people who own cars and drive them. Now, if they live in suburbs and follow a daily occupation, a car is not much use unless they go out in it on Sunday. Golf, also, is a game which few busy men can play during the week, as it involves a journey to the links and a rather prolonged absence from business. But on Sunday it is possible to put in a couple of leisurely rounds and make a long day of it. The Church is not in a position to fight for

a strict observance of the Sabbath, inasmuch as bishops and clergymen write for the Sunday papers. Many ministers use trains and Tubes and buses on Sunday, and in their newspaper announcements of services give the name of the nearest Tube station and the number of the bus that deposits its passengers somewhere adjacent to the church. Moreover, some churches run bookstalls for the sale of books and periodicals, thus identifying themselves with Sunday trading, which only a few years ago was considered a deadly sin. When Mr. Rattenbury was holding Sunday evening services at the Lyceum Theatre he told me that he calculated that his congregation contributed every week £30 to the collection and spent £100 on travelling to and from the theatre. D. L. Moody always argued that if the Sabbath be broken there will soon be no Church, and if the Church be disintegrated there will, before long, be no home, and it is quite possible that he was right.

We have gained in the last few years an enormous increase of leisure. The shortening of hours of labour and the use of labour-

saving devices and the speeding up of the means of transportation have, for most people, set free several hours of the day. But unless leisure is consecrated to the highest uses it will merely make us flabby, restless and discontented. Leisure is a positive danger unless it enables those who enjoy it to acquire sane, wholesome, worth-while interests, culture and experience. I once heard a rich, idle woman remark that she had been to the South of France for a month and she thought it had done her good. "Good for what?" inquired her rather waspish friend. And while I rejoice in the increase of leisure which all classes are enjoying today, I am sometimes inclined to inquire: "Leisure for what?" For more dancing, more movies, more football matches, more noisy excitement? Or for more reading and thinking, more good music and healthy exercise? Until we learn the secret of the right use of leisure we are not likely to develop fine character or create a better civilisation. Unless we have what Lyman Beecher called "moral dynamite and intellectual electricity," a home of leisure and

comfort may be little more than a sanitary, well-furnished sty. The Bishop of Massachusetts, on his retirement a few months ago, said that the right use of leisure would be the most difficult problem the next generation would have to face.

Amongst the many striking changes in the habits of women I can think of none more repulsive than the use of the lip-stick. The use of powder and rouge by the majority of women and girls is bad enough, but the habit of smearing and painting the lips with a lip-stick is to me—and I think to most men—perfectly detestable. It deceives nobody, and is not even meant to deceive. Indeed, it only makes middle-aged women look more haggard and withered; and if the modern girl could discover what she looks like when she goes about with a blood-red gash where her mouth ought to be she would never use a lip-stick again. Restaurant-keepers are complaining of red-paint marks on table napkins, and it is said that a reckless youth who kissed a modern young lady at a dance suffered severely the next day from "painter's colic." "Laugh, and the world laughs with you,"

says an American writer, "Weep, and you streak your rouge." Twenty years ago, if by some unfortunate accident you surprised a lady in the act of doing something to her face, she would have shrieked. Now, in the stalls of a theatre or the lounge of an hotel, in omnibuses and railway carriages, she powders her nose, decorates her lips, and generally paints and renovates her façade. I will make the women who paint and make up their faces a present of a very interesting and significant fact, and I hope they will like it. Years ago the fallen women on the streets used to paint and powder their faces—indeed, it was generally by that gaudy mask that you knew them. Now they do it no longer—they aim at an appearance of modesty and decorum, just as the virtuous women now adopt the discarded habits of the prostitute.

Dancing, which was once frowned upon, if not altogether prohibited by religious people, is now an almost universal practice. Lovers used to find a dark corner in which to caress—now they do it in the glaring light of a crowded ball-room. In hotels, on board ship,

in thousands of public halls and occasionally even on church premises you will see crowds of young men and women walking to music —for modern dancing is little more than that —their bodies locked together in close embrace. In the public dancing halls you may see a number of girls shut off by a low, slight barrier. A youth arrives, looks them over, chooses the one who pleases him, calls her out and takes a sixpenny ticket, which gives him the right to dance with her. This seems to me an odious and disgusting practice, which places the girl in an unnecessarily humiliating position. I have been in Continental restaurants where professional male dancers were employed, and I am not being too hard on them when I say that they were corrupt, treacherous weaklings, and the idea of healthy girls dancing with such odious creatures and embracing them was enough to move any fastidious person to intemperate disgust.

Dancing has practically killed music. It used to be possible on ships and in hotels to listen to good music by an orchestra after dinner. Now the orchestra, assisted by weird,

shrieking, wailing, tormenting instruments, performs the savage music of the jungle for the benefit of people who apparently cannot read or talk or sit still, but must be sliding and wriggling about the floor all the time in a whirl of promiscuous caress. What is to be the attitude of the Churches to dancing? No one can tell, because just now the Churches will not take up any strong and decided attitude towards anything. I doubt whether any minister would dare to preach a sermon against dancing—he would be afraid of losing the few young people he has left. And he may be right.

The latest and silliest craze is greyhound racing. On many evenings last summer one hundred thousand immortal souls were drawn to the White City to see greyhounds chasing a dummy electric hare and to gamble on the results. The stadium was simply swarming with bookmakers and their clerks. All over England stadiums are being erected or adapted for this new sport and for the orgy of betting which accompanies it. Those who are interested in horse racing are becoming seriously alarmed, because the great majority of people

are not likely to take a day off to go to a horse race if they can get the thrill of racing and the opportunity of backing their fancy in the evening at the end of a bus ride. We look with horror on a few hundred rich people gambling at Monte Carlo, but no one seems particularly alarmed at this enormous extension of small betting on the part of those who can ill afford to lose their money.

When I was young, card playing was considered rather disgraceful and was relentlessly condemned by all Christian people. Only a few years ago it was not allowed on Church institutional premises, although billiards were permitted and encouraged. But I should say that card playing is freely indulged in to-day in most religious homes, and certainly many ministers play bridge. An expert observer declares that the problem of youth is very largely the problem of the money-mad father and the bridge-mad mother. I have never played cards, and I do not even know their names—I can always find something more amusing and interesting to do—but for the life of me I cannot see any particular sin in

the game, except that it makes otherwise amiable people extraordinarily touchy and irritable.

A very healthy change in our habits is the modern passion for fresh air. When I was a small boy my mother used to come into my bedroom every night to make sure that the window was shut, and there was a great row if someone had left it open. If she came in now—and how I wish she could !—she would come to see that it was well open. We used to be told that it was almost fatal to sit in a draught, but I always sit in a draught if I can find one to sit in. When Mrs. Silvester Horne was at Whitefields she insisted on the windows being opened on both sides of the church, and on some occasions, when a strong wind was blowing from the north, the preacher had to hold down the leaves of the Bible and use the hymn-book as a paper-weight to secure his sermon notes. There were many angry complaints, and at length Mrs. Horne, in self-defence, had some remarks of Sir Frederick Treves in favour of draughts printed and framed and hung up in the lobby. The fact is you may get a poisonous cold in

ill-ventilated theatres, churches, cinemas and railway carriages, but never from a current of fresh air. One reason why women live longer than men is that they dress more lightly.

V THE NEXT WAR

WILL there be another war? If there is, it will not last very long—neither will civilisation. It will be entirely different from all past wars, for civilian populations will be annihilated before military and naval forces can start operations. Frontiers and fortifications no longer exist. The bombing aeroplane has rendered them useless and superfluous. All the civilised nations have laboratories full of chemists discovering and preparing the deadliest poisons with which civilians can be blinded and suffocated directly the next war breaks out. There will be no time for leisurely citizens to buy maps and stick flags into them—an occupation that used to show, as Mr. Galsworthy said, "what the nation could do when it was roused." The great manslaughter will be sudden, swift and final.

There is a new school of thought regarding the next war. It sees that a war which takes four years to win may not be worth winning. But by a sudden attack with thousands of modern aeroplanes, equipped with deadly poisons, you could bring a nation to its knees in a few hours. During the last war enemy aeroplanes dropped explosive bombs on London, but it was very difficult to aim accurately at anything. When they discharge poisons from the air it will not matter in the least where they fall. A very small quantity will carry suffering and death to a wide area. There is no possible defence against attack by aeroplane; the utmost you can do is to make reprisals on enemy capitals; but if the belligerent who gets in the first blow is fairly successful there may be no one alive to carry out the reprisals.

Lest anyone should suspect me of being an hysterical alarmist, I will copy a paragraph from a "Manual of the Medical Aspects of Chemical Warfare," published by our own War Office on August 6th, 1926. It deals with "Arsenical Warfare Gases," and states that they are "readily dispersed without

decomposition by the aid of heat, in the form of an intensely irritant smoke—i.e. in actual particles of an extremely minute size. A substance in this very fine particulate form can remain suspended in the air for an immense time. In man, slight and transitory nasal irritation is appreciable after an exposure of five minutes to as little as one part of diphenyl-chloroarsine in 200 million parts of air, and as the concentration is increased the irritation shows itself sooner and in rapidly increasing severity. Marked symptoms are produced by exposure to one part in 50 million parts of air, and it may be stated in general that this concentration forms the limit of tolerance of ordinary individuals for an exposure lasting five minutes. A concentration of one part in 10 million will probably incapacitate a man within a minute from the pain and distress, and nausea and vomiting accompany an exposure of from two to three minutes of this concentration. These substances are generally used to cause such sensory irritation that the victim is unable to tolerate a respirator." Read this carefully and you will see that it is an explanation, in the language

of income-tax forms, of how men, women and children will be choked, poisoned and killed in the next war.

Now, if war is to be so democratised that whole civilian populations are to bear the brunt of it and be wiped out almost before they know it has started, the time has come to democratise war in another sense. I suggest that the war-making powers of governments should be taken away from them and vested in the people. Governments are never elected on the definite, clear-cut issue of peace or war; they are chosen to carry out certain domestic policies, and it is quite possible that when they enter upon a war they no longer represent the sentiment of the nation. Our governments have shown themselves unable to protect us against war, and they are resuming their old irritating intrigues, alliances and pernicious balances of power, whereas the great self-governing peoples are quite ready to trust each other. Mr. A. B. Houghton, the American Ambassador to Great Britain, made a very remarkable speech some time ago at Harvard, which most of the American and British newspapers have chosen

to ignore. This wise and experienced and highly responsible man, who occupies the most important diplomatic post in the world, did not hesitate to speak slightingly of governments as "little groups of men" who manœuvre the masses into dangerous and fatal positions, from which it appears impossible to recede. They then appeal to the people with every power of organised propaganda, and finally they plunge them into war. Mr. Houghton believes that if the power to declare war were in the hands of the population conflict could be avoided. He declares that "those peoples who have demonstrated their competence to govern themselves within their own national frontiers must assume direct responsibility for their relations with each other." They have shown themselves able to manage their domestic affairs, and, as Mr. Houghton says, "foreign affairs are merely an extension of their domestic affairs." This great ambassador scoffs at the suggestion that there is anything mysterious about foreign affairs and that "only cynical gentlemen of bilingual attainments" are competent to deal with them. The power to make war, he

holds, is the one power which a people ought specially to preserve to itself, " since it puts in jeopardy their collective lives and property. And yet, strangely enough, it is the one power they do not possess." Cynical militarists may contend that the people would vote for war. I doubt it. In any case, it would be an immense safeguard to democratise the greatest power for evil which now rests in the hands of governments.

The grotesque extravagance of our huge Navy is very difficult to understand. We are told it is for our reasonable protection—but against whom? In 1894 Mr. Gladstone resigned as a protest against a " mad " increase in the Naval Estimates which brought our expenditure on defence up to 35 millions. In 1913 it was 77 millions. To-day, with the German Fleet at the bottom of the sea, it is 115 millions. The whole of the school medical services in this country for 1926–7 cost three millions. On one warship—H.M.S. *Rodney*—we spent seven millions. We could clear away and rebuild miles of slums with the money we waste on guarding unthreatened seas and preparing for mythical armadas.

"The wicked flee when no man pursueth," and we are building warships when there is nobody anywhere in sight to build against. If we are aiming to prevent slights and pin-pricks, then I say that national pride is never worth the massacre of millions of boys. You may say that there is the possibility of a just war, but all wars are considered just by those who make them—it generally takes about five years for the people to discover that a war was a political blunder, a crime against humanity and a sin against God. Governments have to get the citizens into a fighting mood before they can be successfully stampeded into war, and propaganda is launched with that purpose. In war time, as we know now, propaganda is only a pretentious word to cover shameless lying.

War is a dirty business. There is nothing fair or noble about it. You spy and lie and use any weapon that is handy. It brings the scum to the top and gives scoundrels the chance of their lives. For war is a lucrative business for greedy adventurers. Describing the hideous convulsion of 1914–18, Mr. Winston Churchill says: "All the horrors of

all the ages were brought together, and not only armies but whole populations were thrust into the midst of them. . . . Every outrage against humanity or international law was repaid by reprisals, often on a greater scale and of longer duration. No truce or parley mitigated the strife of the armies. The wounded died between the lines; the dead mouldered into the soil. . . . When all was over, torture and cannibalism were the only two expedients that the civilised, scientific Christian States had been able to deny themselves, and they were of doubtful utility." Mr. H. M. Tomlinson, the well-known author, knows what war is like. He has seen what happens when soldier boys get chlorine gas in the lungs, and what a group of children looks like when their bodies have been dispersed with an aeroplane bomb. And he has come to this definite conclusion: that whatever may be the stated reason for another war, and whoever may be the enemy, good citizens can have no part in it. "I for one," he says, "will not serve, will not help, will not pay, and am prepared to take the consequences. There are worse things than even

the obscenity of the battle-ground, and one is the denial of the light. Light has come to some of us and we will have no more to do with that obscene outrage on the intelligence men call war. Let those who like it get on with it. For if the stupidities of our governors and the apathy of our publics once more allow the plague to spread, then humanity will richly deserve its fate which would surely come. The world may not be worth the saving; men and women had better die out, and most likely they would."

Those who are apprehensive about the possibility of another war may find some consolation in the fact that it will certainly not be supported by the capitalists, for they know very well that it will mean the loss of everything they possess. And if capitalists oppose a war it is difficult to see how it could be started and maintained. It is a pleasure to me for the first time in my life to say a good word for capitalists.

But nothing will do more to prevent the risk of war than the abandonment of race prejudices, nationalistic pride and suspicion, all disdain for those of lesser breeds, all

hatred of foreigners. Jesus said, " If you don't love your brother you cannot love God " —and by brother He did not mean the pleasant people in chapels and clubs. He meant negroes and Chinamen, Russians and Mexicans, publicans and prostitutes. He chose poor working men as His first ministers, and commanded them to preach His gospel to people of all races, colours and classes. Jesus, said Lowell, was the original democrat.

I wish all editors and proprietors of newspapers would firmly exclude bitter and provocative references to foreign countries and governments. They, of all men, know the power of words and the peril of propaganda. They have seen how easily pin-pricks, sneers and persistent nagging can land nations in dangerous and sometimes fatal entanglements. They know that aggressive and pugilistic language leads men in time to disfigure and destroy each other, and might possibly let loose forces that would wipe out civilisation. A well-known editor and journalist said to me a few nights ago : " I have made up my mind never to hate or despise anybody for the rest of my life." Hate is a poisonous

and corroding thing—it creates frayed tempers and nervous instability, and can infect whole societies with morbid fears and uncontrollable hostilities. If we could finally expel it we should have a transformed world well worth living in.

There is a passage in a modern novel which stabs and probes the imbecility of war. "Tommy stood by the side of his mother's chair and stared at Michael with a puzzled face. 'Daddy,' he demanded attention in his childish treble, 'how do they do when they have a war? Do they have it in a room or go outside and fight?' 'They talk about it first in a room, son,' his father replied, 'then they go outside and have the war.' 'What makes 'em do that, daddy?' Tommy insisted. 'Why don't they fight in the room?' 'Because they are not fighting men. They go out of the room and get other people to do the fighting for them.' 'But why do they, daddy?' Michael pondered a moment. 'Well, they tell people things that will make them afraid. They tell them that they'll lose their children and their homes and all their money unless they fight. That makes 'em afraid. So they

fight. The war comes when they are all afraid of each other.' 'Would they lose 'em if they didn't fight?' was Tommy's next question. 'No, they wouldn't,' his father replied. 'They lose them when they do fight, but they don't know that until the war is over.' 'I wouldn't fight for 'em,' Tommy declared in a bellicose manner. 'I'll have to visit that boy in jail some day,' Michael declared."

I fear youth is in despair about the old people, so far as war is concerned. "I never expect to persuade people of anything," says one of the young men in Margaret Kennedy's last novel. "Their minds were made up before I was born." And of one of her young women Margaret Kennedy says: "She had seen the reckless dissipation of millions, the bankruptcy of nations and the collapse of all civilised society. She knew that man, when he has constructed a perfectly safe ship, will never rest until he has invented a torpedo to destroy it. . . . For safety she turned to the hard, scornful self-reliance that is the shield of her generation."

One thing is certain: the Churches will

have to consider very soon and very seriously their attitude to war. They express a horror of war when there is no war going on, but immediately the mass murder gets started they give it their blessing and support. They appear to think that the murder of one man is cruel and criminal, but that a massacre on a large scale with flags flying and bands playing is rather noble. This will not do—unless they are prepared to lose the youth of the nation. The new generation is amazed and appalled at the folly and futility of such a weak-kneed policy. Either the Churches believe collective slaughter to be wrong and un-Christian or they think it is inevitable and necessary. They must make up their minds one way or the other, or their fatuous weakness will alienate all thoughtful and intelligent people. Dr. Jowett saw this very clearly before he died. He supported the War—but with grave misgivings. In a sermon he preached at the City Temple during the War he warned the Church that its most difficult task when the War was over would be to recover its ideals. It never has recovered them. He told Dr. J. D. Jones, on one

occasion, that unless the Church revised or reversed its attitude to war it would not only face the certain loss of its young people, but after the next war there would be no Church. Dr. Clayton Morrison, the able editor of the *Christian Century*—the most influential religious paper in the United States—declares that "it is religion that has kept war alive." And this, of course, is perfectly true. The Church can end international warfare whenever it likes. For it would be difficult, if not impossible, to start a war without the blessing and support of the Christian Churches. No government could successfully mobilise a nation for war in the teeth of the firm opposition of a united Church. I submit that the Churches should face this business while yet there is time. If another war comes it will not destroy Christianity—ultimately Christianity must destroy war—but it will wreck institutional religion.

VI THE NEW PRESS

During the last twenty years the number of newspapers in this country has decreased, chiefly owing to amalgamations, absorptions and the organisation of syndicates. London has now fewer evening papers in proportion to its population than any city in the world. At one time we had nine evening papers. Now there are only three. Glasgow, with a population of only just over a million, has the same number. But during the period referred to the sales of newspapers have more than doubled, the prices have been doubled, and advertisement rates have been trebled. At the end of the last century very few women and young people ever looked at a newspaper, but the new Press has attracted them by the million by means of serial stories, pictures, prize competitions, insurance coupons and articles on home and social topics—and these

new features have served a useful purpose by stabilising circulations even when the current news is dull and unimportant. The capture of women readers has led quite naturally to an enormous increase of advertising, for you have only to examine the advertisement columns of any publication to see that at least three-fourths of them are aimed directly at women. Twenty-five years ago there were not a dozen big advertisers—indeed, advertising was generally considered rather vulgar and quite unnecessary. The advertising that did exist was timid, scanty and inexpensive. Now the advertisers in this country spend many millions of pounds every year.

We have seen in the last few years a complete revolution in the newspaper world. The Rothermere, Beaverbrook and Berry groups now monopolise the greater part of the British Press. Our newspapers therefore are in the hands of a few great trusts, and as trusts exist to make dividends they aim at big circulations —not because big sales pay in themselves, for no newspaper could be produced for what we pay for it, but because the sale of millions attracts gigantic advertising at profitable prices.

Now, to secure a sale of millions you do not aim very high—you must take account of crude tastes and low intelligence. Thus the popular Press is often lurid, trivial and sensational and seems to give an exaggerated attention to lust and crime. It ministers to what Thomas Hardy called the "degrading thirst for outrageous stimulation." It certainly encourages gambling by offering enormous prizes—often amounting to thousands of pounds—to those who guess the winners of horse races and football matches. The Postmaster-General stated in the House of Commons that the estimated number of letters sent in connection with competitions to addresses in the E.C. district of London was thirteen millions in one month. Mr. Wickham Steed has pointed out that men who regard the Press solely as a "business" are not always the men best fitted to act as trustees of the public conscience. "The aptitudes needed for money-making," he adds, "are very different from those required for prompt formation of sound opinion upon matters of general public interest; and no amount of training, experience or study will

enable journalists to comment soundly on public affairs if their positions are at the mercy of profit-hunting proprietors who are themselves at the mercy of advertisers. In such conditions, what should be a steadying and enlightening influence tends to become as unsteady and as hysterical as the influence of jobbers on a stock exchange." That a clean, wholesome, constructive paper can be a commercial success has been proved by the *Christian Science Monitor*, a large daily paper which has been published in America since 1908. It is entirely free from scandal and sensationalism, and refuses a large amount of advertising which does not come up to its high standards. This searching censorship of advertisement copy only increases the confidence of the public, and so eager are the big firms to buy space that the advertisements increased 247 per cent. in four years.

The new Press aims at the mass production of public opinion, but I believe it is true to say that the newspapers have now far less influence than they were able to exert a quarter of a century ago. They are organs of news rather than organs of opinion. Cabinets are

no longer shaken by leading articles, and Governments often remain unmoved in the face of the fiercest criticism. The Labour Party has made more progress than any other political party, and it has had practically no Press at all. The organisation of powerful syndicates has been a bad thing for journalists, for there is less work to go round, and it has practically eliminated the great editors. Millionaire peers and ambitious capitalists out to make dividends have no use for editors of strong personality and intellectual distinction like J. A. Spender and H. W. Massingham and A. G. Gardiner, and they were promptly dropped. The only two prominent, independent and influential editors left to-day are C. P. Scott, the distinguished and world-famous editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, and J. L. Garvin, the able and popular editor of the *Observer*. The new Press fills many of its pages with highly-paid articles by ecclesiastical amateurs and titled blacklegs—a policy which, of course, robs the professional journalsits of work and money. Most newspapers now give much space to pictures, but their readers must surely be getting weary of

politicians smoking pipes, Royalties opening infirmaries, and rows of grinning, half-naked girls on a seaside beach posing for the merciless camera and the many-millioned public.

Of the new developments in newspapers the most significant, and probably the most remunerative, has been the sensational progress of the Sunday paper. Up to the time of the War the sale of Sunday newspapers in England was somewhat restricted, and they were rigidly excluded from religious homes. During the War, however, the hunger for news was insatiable, and armed with this excuse churchgoers would buy Sunday papers on the way to places of worship and openly display them on the ledges of the pews. The habit thus formed was not abandoned when the War was over. And to-day most religious people read the Sunday papers, and Anglican clergymen and Nonconformist ministers contribute articles to them. It is estimated that the Sunday Press has a sale of from twelve to fourteen million copies. Unfortunately, the most gigantic sales are achieved by the papers that least deserve them. It is at least disconcerting to find that a large proportion of

the population of this country spends part of the Sabbath in reading the repulsive records of vice and fraud and the life stories of condemned murderers. Politicians have been quick to see the advantage of reaching the whole population on a day when it has leisure to read and discuss their speeches, and so they have established the habit of holding important political demonstrations on Saturday afternoon in time to be reported in the Sunday Press.

Is it possible for the Press to make wars? There is some difference of opinion on this point, but it is at least open to doubt whether the newspapers had much to do with hurrying the world into the ghastly catastrophe of 1914. Certainly the Press in the belligerent countries did not take up a more menacing attitude than the governments. I cannot see that any European government was driven into the War by newspaper pressure. Someone has said that if instead of Pashitch, Sazonov, Poincaré, Berchtold and Grey there had been in their offices Bogitschevitch, Kokovtsov, Caillaux, Tisza and Morley there would have been no War. On the other hand, Mr. J. A.

Spender says that " the Press quarrels which raged in Europe before the War contributed heavily to the fear, suspicion and embitterment which finally brought about the great disaster." And Mr. Walter Lippmann, the American publicist, has written very vigorously in his book, " Liberty and the News," of the opportunities presented to the unscrupulous journalist in the realm of international relations. " If I lie in a lawsuit involving the fate of my neighbour's cow," says Mr. Lippmann, " I can go to jail. But if I lie to a million readers in a matter involving war and peace I can lie my head off, and if I choose the right series of lies be entirely irresponsible. Nobody will punish me if I lie about Japan, for instance. I can announce that every Japanese valet is a reservist, and every Japanese store a mobilisation centre. I am immune. And if there should be hostilities with Japan the more I lied the more popular I should be. If I asserted that the Japanese secretly drank the blood of children, that Japanese women were unchaste, that the Japanese were really not a branch of the human race at all I guarantee that most of the newspapers would

print it eagerly, and that I should get a hearing in churches all over the country. And all this for the reason that the public, when it is dependent on testimony and protected by no rules of evidence, can act only on the excitement of its pugnacities and its hopes." Substitute some other country for Japan, and you will see how we in England might be misled by the manufactured propaganda of an irresponsible gramophone Press.

If the " leading article " has lost its power in shaping the policy of governments and forming public opinion, this does not mean that the Press to-day has no influence. It is enormously and perilously influential. It can publish some facts and suppress others. Lord Northcliffe used to say that the power of the Press was nothing compared with the power of the " suppress." A great deal of what looks like news is cleverly insinuated propaganda. Moreover, contributors to a newspaper know its opinions and prejudices, and almost unconsciously colour their copy to please the proprietor. By excluding certain facts and emphasising others it is possible so to distort the presentation of a statement as to render

it altogether misleading. I suggest that it would be a good thing if we limited our support to those papers whose news service is truthful and impartial. The public will always get exactly the sort of Press it wants, and if the Christian people of this country were careful to select papers that are clean and honourable and gentlemanly, papers that observe a scrupulous reticence in their records of crime and vice, we should soon get a healthier Press. We shall do well rigidly to boycott any paper that exploits the passions of the crowd or is blatantly insincere or demoralising. If anyone is inclined to be unduly optimistic concerning the quality of the public mind, let him remember that while newspapers which are noisy and frothy and pander to the lowest cravings sell by millions, the most brilliant weekly review and the ablest and best conducted daily paper in the country have very limited circulations. I asked a distinguished journalist the other day to what extent our remuneration for writing in newspapers would be increased if we committed a criminal offence, and he estimated that we should be offered at

least a hundred times as much as we get now.

One of the most dangerous symptoms today is the indifference of the public to the debates and decisions of the House of Commons, and this is largely due to the action of the new Press in reducing Parliamentary reports to a few paragraphs dealing with unseemly incidents, rude interruptions or smart retorts.

In these turbulent times we need, as never before, an enlightened, independent Press. We have brilliantly organised newspapers, conducted with boundless enterprise and supreme ability, yet it is not an exaggeration to say that some of them are unencumbered by principles and unembarrassed by any fastidious reticence. In the Belgian Congo, where the natives use no money, the Sunday edition of the *New York Times* is sold for nine eggs. I wonder how many eggs, and what kind of eggs, they would give for some of our Sunday papers?

VII THE AWAKENING OF LABOUR

THE Labour Party is remarkable for the brevity of its history and the rapidity of its growth. Thirty years ago it barely existed, and the efforts of working men to achieve Parliamentary representation were regarded by politicians with complete indifference and by Society with lofty contempt. The story of the last hundred years can be divided into three chapters—the exploitation of labour, the revolt of labour, and the gradual improvement in the conditions of labour through the efforts of the trade unions. But even now one-tenth of the people own nine-tenths of the wealth, and nine-tenths of the people have to worry along as best they can on one-tenth of the wealth. In 1925–6 about 540,000 people died in Great Britain. Of these 435,000 left behind them no wealth at all. The remaining 105,000 persons left property worth,

in all, 465 millions. A hundred years ago nearly all the thinking and governing in this country was done by a small minority of privileged persons. Now the masses of the people, no longer uneducated and submissive, are thinking furiously and soon they themselves will be the governing class.

At the second Trade Union Congress, held in Birmingham in 1869, a paper was read on "Direct Labour Representation in Parliament," but no action was taken beyond an attempt to secure from the Liberal Party opportunities for the return of a few working-class members. At the general election in 1874 fourteen working men went to the poll, two of whom were elected—one was Thomas Burt—but only by a friendly arrangement with the Liberals. In 1880 that stalwart Methodist, Henry Broadhurst, was elected, and by 1885 eleven Labour representatives sat in Parliament. In 1887 an able and fiery young Ayrshire miner, James Keir Hardie, called upon the Trade Unions to cut clean away from all association with the Liberals and form a completely independent Labour

Party, but the suggestion of this steadfast, unselfish, courageous Christian man made but little impression, and when, shortly afterwards, he fought Mid-Lanark against both Liberal and Tory, he only polled 619 votes. Having had little success with the Trade Union Congress, Keir Hardie went to Glasgow and formed the Scottish Labour Party under the presidency of Mr. Cunninghame Graham, M.P., who, although he sat in Parliament as a Liberal, had declared himself a Socialist.

The real start of the Labour Party came in 1892—thirty-six years ago—when Keir Hardie was returned for West Ham ; the first member who entered the House of Commons as an Independent Labour man. Fourteen other working men were also elected, including John Burns and Joseph Arch. The Independent Labour Party was formed in 1893 at a conference in Bradford presided over by Keir Hardie, but it soon experienced a smashing set-back. In 1895 it ran twenty-eight candidates, but they were all beaten, including Keir Hardie. The agitation amongst Trade Unionists for Parliamentary representation

was still kept up, and at the Congress in 1899 steps were taken to form a Labour Representation Committee as an independent organisation to include Trade Unions, Trade Councils, Co-operative Societies and Socialist Organisations. In February, 1900, the new body was established, and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was appointed the first secretary at a salary of £3 a week. At the general election of 1906 fifty independent Labour candidates went to the poll, but only twenty-nine were elected. However, they captured the miners' representatives and certain working men who had been allied with the Liberals, and thus made up a Labour Party of forty-two. So far the party was a federation of Trade Unions, Trade Councils and Socialist Societies, but later on it opened its ranks to middle-class and wealthy men. As recently as ten years ago—at the general election in 1918—only fifty-seven Labour men were returned, but the widespread dissatisfaction with the "Coupon" Parliament led to many successes at by-elections, so that by 1922 the party numbered seventy-five.

In 1922 a hundred and forty-two Labour

members were elected, and the Labour Party was officially recognised as His Majesty's Opposition. In January, 1924, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, at the head of a party of 191, formed the first Labour Cabinet. It was a great triumph, considering that twenty years ago the Labour Party was merely marking time and could only poll a total of less than 400,000 votes. If anyone had prophesied at that time that it would become the official Opposition and govern the country he would have been dismissed with incredulous laughter. Yet in November, 1924, in spite of the prejudice aroused by its Russian policy, the Labour Party polled 5,551,000 votes. The party has won the support of many well-to-do people like Lord Olivier, Viscount Chelmsford, Lord Arnold, Mr. C. P. Trevelyan, Mr. Noel Buxton, Mr. C. Roden Buxton, Mr. Bernhard Baron, Mr. Oswald Mosley, Mr. Oliver Baldwin, and the gifted son and daughter of the late Mr. St. Leo Strachey. It has many adherents at the Universities, and has attracted an enormous following among the Nonconformist Churches.

What has produced this ominous stirring

of new life and activity amongst the workers? Smouldering discontents have become inflamed and vehemently vocal. Low wages and foul slums have made life unbearable. I remember visiting a festering mass of filthy courts and streets before the War with a distinguished journalist, and as he looked at men and women and little children living under conditions to which no country squire would condemn his horses and dogs, he said, "If ever they wake up and start thinking——!" They have now been stabbed into wakefulness and are thinking earnestly and constructively. Can we be surprised? We give the people free education, we give them access to free libraries, we let them go to chapels where they hear about the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man and read the Sermon on the Mount, we allow them to read Mr. Wells's novels and see Mr. Shaw's plays—and then some people expect them to be docile and contented and to vote for reactionary Tories.

In this machine age the workers are often cruelly depressed by the wearing monotony of their tasks. In a great boot factory to-day

there is not a man who could make a pair of boots. The story is told of a man in Ford's factory in Detroit who boasted that he had been promoted. He had—he was in future to tighten up bolt A instead of bolt B on the radiator. The workers want to see industry so organised and adjusted that it shall provide conditions of decent living and equality of opportunity. But what they most desire is a dependable basis of security. I really believe a working man would not mind accepting a little less money if he could only feel sure that he would get it regularly. The haunting dread of the future—of the possibility of idleness and poverty in their old age—is a crushing anxiety from which the workers are seldom free.

Labour is not without its faults. It has no mastery of strategy and tactics, and this places it at a disadvantage when fighting politicians who have little else but tactics. It sometimes manœuvres with elephantine obtuseness, but its leaders are too much in earnest to make good jugglers, and they have not had time to master the crafty tricks of political careerists. Labour has a tendency

to think of everything in terms of wages, but on the other hand capitalists have long thought of everything in terms of dividends. It must win agriculture before it can hope for an adequate independent majority—but that it is certain to secure such a majority before long no one has now the slightest doubt. Under a Labour Government we may well hope that England will make an ordered progress towards a stable European peace, a reconciliation between classes and a recovery of prosperity. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald may have made certain tactical blunders while he was in office, but the extraordinary ability he showed in conducting the negotiations of the Conference of London will not easily be forgotten. He proved himself a statesman of remarkable skill, patience and resource. The Labour Party is inspired by a vision of a more just and generous social order, a better and happier world. It wants to deliver the people from dragging poverty and from the torturing shadow of economic insecurity. It wants to rid the world of its hates and suspicions and corroding fears.

One significant fact about the Labour

movement is that culture is no longer the monopoly of the moneyed classes. Publishers will tell you that more serious and thoughtful books are sold in the industrial districts than in Mayfair. You are more likely to hear slovenly English from the Tory side of the House of Commons than from the Labour benches. And the Labour movement has a definitely religious basis. It was cradled in Nonconformity, and many of its leaders learned in village chapels not only how to speak but the very principles they now declare to the world. Labour is essentially evangelistic in its methods, for every member is a volunteer worker and an unpaid missionary, and thus it is able, without any expense, to saturate the slums with propaganda. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald affirms that behind the economic programme of the Labour Party are "thoughts and emotions and assumptions and axioms which presuppose the truths of the religious view of the ends of creation and the destiny of man." Nearly all the Labour men I know believe that Jesus is the only infallible Guide to life, the only Saviour of society, and they

would build their movement on this just, reasonable and Christian basis: "From each according to his ability; to each according to his need."

THE failure of the Individualism of the nineteenth century seems to have forced us into the Socialism of the twentieth. We have three political parties in England to-day, and they oppose one another " according to plan " with extreme bitterness and with a vast expenditure of money and effort. And yet they are all three Socialistic ! Forty years ago some of the present-day Tories would have been regarded as dangerous Radicals. The very first thing Winston Churchill did when he became Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer was to introduce pensions for widows. This cost his rich friends a great amount of money, but what did he care ? He was carrying out the Socialist demand for heavy taxation of the wealthy in order to provide social service for the poor. Mr. Baldwin's Government took in three years

thirty millions from the rich taxpayers to provide houses for poor people and countless other millions for the unemployed, thus carrying out what is essentially a Socialist programme. The Tories keep up the pretence of hating Socialism and the practice of being rude to Socialists, but their Government nationalised broadcasting, and is practically nationalising electricity, and it would have to nationalise the coal-mines if it stayed in long enough. Some of my Tory friends are so furious that I am quite certain they will lose their tempers some day and accuse Mr. Baldwin of receiving his orders from Moscow. The Liberals are equally Socialistic, for Mr. Lloyd George's Budget of 1909 aimed at a radical and drastic redistribution of wealth. The House of Lords knows Socialism when it sees it, and it fought this Budget recklessly and perished in the attempt. England has been a more or less Socialistic country ever since. Mr. Keynes declares that measured by the amount of capital employed, two-thirds of the typical, large-scale enterprise of this country has already been removed out of the category of pure private enterprise.

Politics to-day are hopelessly confused. There are reactionary Liberals who were returned with Tory votes and who systematically vote Tory. There are progressive Tories who would be perfectly at home in the Labour Party if they could only forget their class consciousness and go over. In Liberal clubs you will find a few Tories and many Labour men, and when the results of a general election are announced in these clubs all the victories of all three parties are received with cheers. We may well be thankful that we have only three political parties. In Germany there are twenty-five!

The House of Lords in its present form is bound to disappear. That very shrewd and able die-hard Conservative, Lord Younger, frankly admits that in these democratic times you cannot have a Second Chamber which is not democratically elected. With its large and varied assortment of Mr. Lloyd George's friends, its beer and newspaper millionaires, its admirals and generals and great-grandsons of distinguished statesmen, and its two dozen archbishops and bishops robed in

pomp and splendour, it is the strangest and most incongruous gathering in the world. It is doomed—and it knows that it is doomed.

Professor A. F. Pollard reminds us that "Parliamentary institutions have been incomparably the greatest gift of the English people to the civilisation of the world," and it is therefore a very sad and discouraging sign of the times that so many people have lost all faith and interest in politics and have ceased to expect anything of the House of Commons except waste and muddle. They do not even want to read the reports of Parliamentary debates, and so a servile and commercialised Press has ceased to give them the opportunity. I have known many able and enthusiastic Nonconformists who, sickened by the treachery of politicians, have retired from the fight bitter, sulky, disillusioned.

It is quite true that democracy has not proved an overwhelming success, but it is probably the best system yet evolved by the mind of man and there is no alternative to it. We cannot be surprised that democracy should

fail at first, for it makes the most exacting demands. It places heavy obligations on the average citizen and depends entirely on the quality of his mind and character. It expects the ordinary man to be a clear thinker, to share the responsibility of the State, to understand foreign policy, to be able to govern and direct his own life and take his share of social service for the community. Only a very superficial optimist could expect such a system to function successfully all at once. As a matter of fact, it will never succeed at all until it is enlightened, inspired and controlled by the Christian religion. And if we are dubious and apprehensive about the future progress of this country it is because the Churches have lost their grip of the democracy. It has been said that if the plain people of Jerusalem had registered their will with the aid of the most improved type of ballot box there is no evidence to show that they would have preferred Christ to Barabbas. One thing is quite certain : what we have hitherto called the governing classes will govern no longer. Democracy now has the power and it intends to use it. It is indeed more than probable

that we may never again see a Tory government in power.

It is a sad calamity that the great Liberal Party should have drained away its life in humiliating bickerings and suicidal strife. If it is ever to regain its strength it must learn stern lessons from its past mistakes. It was out of touch with the workers and too closely in touch with the international financiers, it stood far too often for individualism and imperialism, it had too many lawyers and they were too fiercely ambitious, it was sometimes led by men who were not Liberals at all, and time and again it used Nonconformity to climb into power, and then contemptuously kicked away the ladder. Its greatest leader was Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and I believe Mr. Stephen McKenna is right in believing that if he had lived five years longer there would have been no War.

We expect far too much of our statesmen and politicians and cruelly overwork them when they are in office. "I have watched you men at work," said a distinguished member of the American Government to a British

ex-Prime Minister, " and I don't see how you stand it." The life of a Prime Minister is a continuous round of unrelieved drudgery. He has to attend the House of Commons more or less regularly for eight months of the year and make speeches and answer questions. He must preside over Cabinet Councils, give countless interviews, watch the Press and public opinion, make speeches at banquets and meetings, attend to the routine duties of his office, arrive at great and important decisions, conciliate opponents and rebellious followers, and keep a sharp eye on his own constituency. No constitution can endure the pressure of such a life for very long.

The man who says " I am no politician " is merely a slacker who is repudiating his duty. Isaiah was a tremendous politician, and he attacked the government of his day with boisterous vigour because they had forgotten —as so many governments do—that it is righteousness that exalteth a nation. If you want the stern truth about politics you need not read newspapers or reviews—read Sir George Adam Smith's book on Isaiah. " To

Isaiah," says Sir George Adam Smith, "a nation's politics are not arbitrary; they are not dependent on the will of Kings or the management of parties. They are the natural outcome of the nation's character. What the people are that will their politics be. If you wish to reform the politics you must first regenerate the people, and it is no use to inveigh against a senseless policy unless you go farther and expose the national temper which has made it possible. A people's own morals have greater influence on their destinies than their despots or legislators. Statesmen are what the State makes them. No Government will attempt a policy for which the nation behind it has not a conscience; and for the greater number of errors committed by their rulers the blame must be laid on the people's own want of character or intelligence." It is futile and foolish to deplore the opportunism of unprincipled politicians and the lying and cheating of weak statesmen—the people put them where they can do most harm, and the people can remove them into a safe obscurity and impotence.

There are still some very excellent but weak-minded folk who consider that religion can be divorced from politics. This attitude seems immoral and irreligious, for it is difficult to understand how a Christian can repudiate the responsibilities of citizenship and still pretend to be a follower of Christ—who loved the people and cared for their health and happiness. If man is immortal everything that has to do with the formation of his character in this world—temperance, housing, social environment and political freedom—assumes a new importance because of its effect on his eternal welfare. Jesus must sometimes find it difficult to recognise amongst His followers those who see their fellows cramped by poverty and stifled in slums and yet stand aside and do nothing because they are too uppish and fastidious to have anything to do with politics. Some time ago, when I wrote an article in a newspaper about the slums of London and criticised the Churches for their complacency when faced by social iniquities, someone challenged me to produce a passage from the Gospels in which Jesus said anything about housing. He

said: "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father." Jesus wanted everybody to have a room where he could be alone and pray.

DEAN INGE declares that in the Great War Europe committed suicide. Before the War he estimated that Europe had fifty years more of ascendency before the centre of power and wealth finally moved across the Atlantic—but with a great European war we sacrificed those fifty years. As the result Asia and Latin America and the United States are already achieving economic dominance while Europe is tired and crumbling. It is a significant fact that in 1925 and 1926 America imported from Asia a few hundred million dollars worth of goods more than it imported from Europe. It is quite possible that before long Latin America may put Europe into the third place. A good deal of new light is flashed upon the new world by a document issued by the International Economic Conference at Geneva. It shows that Japan and the United

States, between them, are consuming to-day nearly two million more bales of cotton each year than they did before the war—and Europe nearly two million bales less.

During the War Japan and India learned to weave their own cotton instead of sending it raw on the long journey to England and having it re-shipped as cloth; and the result has been felt in the cotton mills of Lancashire. The world is learning a great and invaluable economic lesson—that it pays best to produce near the sources of raw materials. This is one explanation of the decay of Europe. Take, for example, the world production of steel. Europe produced 56 per cent. in 1913 and 46 per cent. in 1925. North America produced 43 per cent. in 1913 and 52 per cent. in 1925.

In 1913 Europe had 61 per cent. of the world's trade; in 1924 it had 51 per cent. In the same period Asia's share of the world's trade rose from 11 to 15 per cent., and North America's share from 13 to 17 per cent. Europe has declined in sales and in purchases. The British export trade had fallen in 1923 about 20 per cent. below its volume in 1913,

and American exports of manufactures had increased nearly 50 per cent. America has become the world's banker and has taken the place of England as the great creditor nation of the world. In the first half of 1927 the foreign loans floated in the United States amounted to 786,000,000 dollars—28 per cent. more than in the corresponding period of 1926—and a good deal of this money is lent on condition that it is spent in the United States. The wealth of America is now more than the total assets of Great Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, India, China and Canada. That is to say, it is in excess of 320 billions of dollars. The population of America is about 9 per cent. of the total population of the globe, and its wealth is at least 33 per cent. of the total wealth of the world. For good or evil, the whole world is becoming Americanised. Travellers have found American chewing gum on sale in remote parts of China. Her automobiles are seen everywhere ; her motion pictures cover the world ; her plays fill the theatres of London ; she is outstripping England in the race for world trade, besides driving her out of the

loan market. America is, in fact, challenging our world supremacy. She is assisted, of course, by incredibly low taxation. An American married man with £1,000 a year and three children pays an income tax of about sixteen shillings; an Englishman in the same circumstances pays about £80, or exactly one hundred times as much.

The continent of Europe is not likely to regain the position which it held in international trade before the War. The future undoubtedly belongs to other continents which are developing their enormous resources with all the vigour, initiative and elasticity of youth. Europe is getting old and infirm. Moreover, Europe to-day, as travellers well know, is poisoned with class bitterness and gruesome hates—and this does not make for economic progress. Everywhere you discover the arrogance and egotism of a fiery and embattled nationalism. Mr. Garvin says that while the political and economic dissensions of Europe persist, America will remain the arbiter of the world. The present incoherent and chaotic condition of Europe is full of perilous possibilities. Russia is practically at war

with the Western world; France and Italy are not too friendly; Mussolini demands a mobilised military force of five million men a decade hence, and there is haggling over debts and bickering as to who won the war and lost the peace. There seems to be little prospect of European adjustment or pacification. Mr. Wickham Steed, who knows Europe as few men know it, warns us that Governments to-day "are thinking mainly in terms of war and are drifting towards a position in which only the date of its outbreak will be open to doubt." The tragedy is that throughout Europe Great Britain is regarded as a reactionary and imperialist Power.

Owing to the immense growth of population in the countries from which Europe has received her food, our food supply is no longer secure. Mr. J. M. Keynes has pointed out that Europe consists of the densest aggregation of population in the history of the world—a population accustomed to a relatively high standard of life. Europe is not self-supporting and cannot feed itself. The danger therefore is the rapid depression of the standard of life of European populations to a point which will

mean actual starvation. And, as Mr. Keynes says, "*men will not always die quietly*."

The prosperity of our own country in the nineteenth century was built on cheap production and on coal. Cheap production is a thing of the past and our coal trade has failed us. We must make up our minds to it—there can be little expectation of any expansion in the future. There will probably be a shrinkage of wealth and population and a reversion to simpler conditions of life. The question is whether England can adapt itself in orderly fashion to days of stagnation, struggle and retrograde movement.

The middle classes, the mainstay of England in the last century, have suffered severely from the economic changes that followed the War. The increase in the cost of living has brought to them no corresponding rise in salaries. In most of the suburbs of London to-day you will find hundreds of houses occupied by two families—one of them, finding it impossible to make both ends meet, gratefully snatched the opportunity of easing the burden, and the other, driven to despair by the house shortage, preferred half a house to

no home at all. Scavengers and street cleaners are paid more than school teachers, a capable mechanic would not look at the wage that is offered to many clergymen and ministers, and a compositor often makes more than the struggling journalist whose copy he sets in type.

The economic disorder of Europe can only be mitigated by an invigorated life. If Governments would spend more money on education and less on battleships, we might hope to avoid another disaster like that of 1914. Europe needs a firmer grasp of actualities, greater inventiveness, less luxury and less slacking. Why should we not have in England an Industrial Parliament on the lines of Germany's Federal Economic Council, which since 1919 has proved so extraordinarily successful? This important body, on which employers and workers are equally represented, reviews every aspect of the economic life of Germany, advises the Government, sends delegates before the Reichstag to support its proposals, and generally promotes peace and efficiency in industry.

We need not be panic-stricken at the prospect of a period of stringency and struggle.

The richest countries are not the happiest, and output is not everything. It is better to outstrip another country in culture and happiness than in production and wealth. At the same time a lower standard of living must increase the anxiety of the workers and hinder their welfare and progress. Capitalists can invest their money abroad, but the workers depend entirely on the trade at which they work, and they are the first to feel the effect of a slump in our exports. We are now spending, out of the Rates, close upon a million pounds a week in the relief of destitution. It is possible, of course, that our troubles may be only temporary, for England has come through many tribulations and has made wonderful recoveries. But in the War we sacrificed not only our financial resources, but, what is much more serious, our most virile youth. Our financial stability may be recovered, but our mental and physical energy must for a time remain impoverished. While we were being drained of our best blood and our material possessions America was piling up wealth, securing the good will and co-operation of labour, and ridding herself of

the disabling effects of the liquor traffic. One of these days America will be a sober nation. We have never had to compete with a sober nation, and we could not do it if we tried. We shall be powerless to attempt it while we have 80,000 public-houses and spend over three hundred millions a year on intoxicating drink. We know what freedom from alcohol has meant to America in athletics. In industry it means an added 20 per cent. in accuracy and speed. Perhaps what we need more than anything else is a man who could brace and inspire the nation to face her dangers with realism and courage. There are two blunders we ought to guard against: there must be no embittering jealousy of America's prosperity, and no attempt to place on the workers the impoverishment that will follow the shrinkage of our trade.

Thirty years ago the study of economics was confined to a few experts, but to-day its vital importance is widely recognised and we have vast numbers of lecturers, professors, research workers and students labouring with enthusiasm at what was once called the "dismal science." And I know for a fact

that many of these new economists agree with Mr. Bernard Shaw when he says that "the demands of Jesus are now turning out to be good sense and sound economics." This parched and dejected and war-scarred world must once have been a happy place, and I like to believe in the coming of a new age, when the people will submit to the pale Galilean, when Christ shall rule and His way of living shall be accepted and practised, and fear and hate and rapacious competition shall disappear.

X THE DETERIORATION OF THE DRAMA

FORTY years ago most Christian preachers were stern-eyed puritans who condemned a visit to the theatre as a certain sign of hopeless depravity. The theatre was attacked from the pulpit in harsh and bitter terms—I once heard it called the vestibule of hell. And then the young people suddenly became inquisitive and explorative. They asked very pointed questions. If the preachers had never been to the theatre how did they know it was so bad? And why was youth allowed to go to Nigger Minstrel shows—which *were* vulgar—and prohibited from seeing Irving in "Hamlet"? Also, if ministers quoted Shakespeare in the pulpit where was the harm in seeing his plays well acted in the theatre? Then some of the bolder spirits took the matter into their own hands, and, greatly daring, went up into the shilling gallery. They saw great and noble

drama, plays full of poetry and romance and beauty, they enjoyed a great deal of clean, honest laughter. They discovered that the theatre was not in the least what preachers had represented it to be.

But it was a long time before the ancient prejudices of Nonconformist puritans were broken down. I remember visiting a theatre about twenty-five years ago and finding myself sitting next to a well-known Wesleyan circuit steward, who was full of unnecessary explanations and excuses as to how he had been recommended to go just once to see what it was like. But the reaction when it came was swift and violent, and now all misgivings have been swept away. To-day I do not know one clergyman or minister who is not an occasional theatre-goer. In two nights last summer one London play was seen by the Archbishop of Canterbury and two bishops. Dr. Jowett—a great dramatic artist himself—was intensely fond of a good play, and although Mr. Silvester Horne was too busy a man to go very often he enjoyed a strong drama with almost boyish exhilaration. Dr. Parker went now and then, but he was a stern critic and not easily pleased.

There was nothing about acting that he did not know. Dr. Campbell Morgan did not go for many years, but when he started he made up for lost time by seeing everything that was worth while. The theatre is often a great refreshment and relief to overworked and overburdened people, because it affords a means of escape from the petty worries and harassing duties of sombre life. It takes them into another world—a spurious world, if you like—but all the same a world of immense interest and fascination. It is also a great resource for the lonely. The cinema does not help lonely people—their solitariness is only relieved when they hear the human voice. Yet I never feel quite so lonely as when I am enduring a dull farce which sends my companions into fits of uncontrollable laughter, while it leaves me stiff with boredom.

I have always felt that the wisest attitude for Christian people to take up towards the drama would be to support the good and boycott the bad. That is what most decent people do as regards fiction, and it is a practice which, if generally adopted, should make objectionable plays and books unprofitable.

Unfortunately it has not worked out very successfully. Religious people have been too much inclined to support light and frivolous productions—no doubt as a pleasant and welcome relief in lives that are full of serious occupations. I confess that unlike many of my friends, I have never found much satisfaction in the puerile talk, trivial and reminiscent music and unreal situations of most musical comedies. A friend of mine in New York says he never goes to see musical pieces because he cannot stand "the semicircle of doll-faced cuties." It is true that the strident voices and mechanical gestures of the chorus are rather boring. But the chorus girl is now very different from her predecessor of thirty or forty years ago. She is generally well educated, hard working and ambitious, and she manages her life wisely and marries well. Several have married peers, and one of the few good things that can be said about the House of Lords is that some of the members are wise enough and fortunate enough to marry chorus girls.

London theatre audiences have never been famous for their taste and intelligence. The

British stage may well be proud of such great actresses and good women as Sybil Thorndike, Edith Evans and Irene Vanbrugh, and yet for months together they are not to be seen in London. When I visit New York I invariably see plays by Shakespeare and Bernard Shaw, and I am told that in Berlin it is no uncommon thing for the theatres to be running half a dozen plays by these authors. But if you want to see Shakespeare in London you will have to go into a South London slum, where at the Old Vic you will see far better acting than in most West End theatres. You may find it difficult to see a Shaw play at all, except at rare intervals. We have trivial, inane, artificial and improbable plays, we have plays that are coarse and pernicious, but where will you find any serious contribution to dramatic literature? The London theatre cannot be said to be in a very healthy condition. It is shockingly commercialised, and to a large extent is in the hands of men of little education and no artistic taste. Both in London and New York the stage has sunk to a level of humiliating commonness and distressing vulgarity. Mr. J. R. Towse, a

very able and scholarly dramatic critic in New York—he was born in Streatham—has just retired after fifty-seven years of continual and successful work, and he declares that he "finds the stage at what he believes is its lowest estate in more than a century." He has always regarded the theatre as one of civilisation's greatest educational forces. "That," he says, "is why I denounce the present condition of the stage, destitute of morality as it is." The amusements of Great Britain have now become almost completely Americanised, and anyone who understands the enormous influence of amusements on the population will know what this means. It means that for good or evil the whole country will be Americanised. It must always be remembered that while the churches are open for about three hours a week, the theatres are working over twenty hours a week and the cinemas practically all the time. It would be difficult to over-estimate the importance of the peoples' amusements in moulding taste and shaping opinion. A well-known theatrical manager said recently that the theatre was a great antidote to Socialism. Nothing could

be farther from the truth. Many of the most popular plays produced in recent years have provided powerful and influential Socialistic propaganda. Mr. Miles Malleson's plays, that memorable drama by Sir J. M. Barrie, " The Admirable Crichton," and certain Society plays which have presented members of the nobility and aristocracy as crooks and half-wits must have had a great deal to do with the progress of Socialistic ideas.

We have had in London during the last few years a series of nauseating plays which consisted of little else than the display of daring dresses, the drinking of cocktails, the smoking of cigarettes and some convulsive conversation, sprinkled with devilish *double entendre*. A play has been running in London recently of which Mr. St. John Ervine, the famous dramatic critic, says that " when it is not silly it is disgusting." Describing the leading actress in this successful play he says : " Twice she undresses . . . she stripped with some thoroughness in the first act ; she stripped again, but not so thoroughly, in the second act." Summing up the play Mr. St. John Ervine says : " I consider it symptomatic

of a dull foulness that has become too common in the theatre. . . . It offers an ideal of life to young and febrile imagination which is mean and contemptible." Not long ago there was a play in London in which we witnessed the pleasing spectacle of two young girls drinking themselves into a condition of vulgar and sodden intoxication. The play was enormously popular, and had a long run. Three or four years ago I saw a foul and disgusting play in New York, and I told my American friends that I was perfectly certain it could never be produced on an English stage. But it was produced in London and had a long and successful run. Respectable English actors and actresses played in it, and for many months the best people crowded to see it. They received it with rapturous applause, considered it terribly funny, and, like our own censor, saw no harm in it. The other day *Punch* remarked on the " vulgar suggestiveness " of a song in a London musical comedy, and declared that the actress who had to sing it was " much too wholesome " for her job. Mr. Hubert Griffith, the dramatic critic of the *Evening Standard*, writing about

a play produced a few months ago, said : " I thought up to last night that I was unshockable, but found that I wasn't." Outside the theatre where that play was produced I saw boards announcing " House Full." *Truth* says of the people in a recent play that " they pose and strut, mouthing their vapid and borrowed epigrams and generally behaving like the scum of a third-rate night club."

I am told that very few London managers are inclined to read plays or give beginners a chance. They prefer to import ready-made plays from America, and even then they do not give us the best American plays, for alongside a good deal of dismal filth there is growing up in New York a virile and intellectual drama which deals with new ideas and pressing problems. Some of the best and most successful plays produced in London have been hawked around for years. Mr. Eden Phillpotts's play, " The Farmer's Wife," was only produced twelve years after it was written, and it was declined by nearly every manager in London, while inane plays about a decadent smart set found ready acceptance. Some time ago I saw in the West End of

London a play which one critic described as "a witty comedy." Thousands of people paid twelve shillings to see this play, and this is the sort of thing they got for their money: "*The Peer:* Soames, why am I a lord? *The Butler:* Because you were born a lord, my lord! *The Peer:* Good Lord!" A New York dramatic critic recently dismissed a new play in six words: "Quite a lot of not much," and this would well describe some of the oppressively dull productions that are inflicted on us in London. There is a clause in the leases of some London theatres forbidding sleeping on the premises—but I have slept in them.

Perhaps the most sinister fact about the English stage to-day is not the existence of vulgar, sordid, unclean plays, but the fact that there are so many people who like them and make them pay. And—one almost shudders to say it—gross and obscene plays are chiefly patronised by women who are apparently virtuous and respectable.

There has been a tendency in recent years for girls to appear on the stage with bare limbs. It is quite unnecessary, it is not at all

pleasing, and it must be a humiliating experience for the girls themselves. It is not only common in musical comedy and revue and other frivolous productions, but I have seen the practice introduced into pieces of a higher standard and importance. It may be said in defence that the scanty attire worn by the girls on the stage is no worse than a bathing dress. This is quite true, but a bathing dress is a necessity, and bare limbs on the stage in the glare of the limelights are not.

But we need not give up going to the theatre because of a few nasty plays and occasional doubtful features any more than we should abandon reading because of the existence of two or three foul books. The best service we can render to the stage is to support fine and noble drama and clean, healthy fun and rigidly boycott whatever is tainted and repellent.

XI THE DECLINE OF ORGANISED RELIGION

THE decreasing attendance at public worship and the general decay of institutional religion have now become so acute and so obvious that even the massive, thick-skinned optimism of leaders and ecclesiastics is beginning to break and weaken. They are at last becoming alarmed, and well they may. Very few churches are anything like full, and many churches are nearly empty. I have heard distinguished Free Church leaders preach in provincial churches to forty or sixty people. I constantly hear a very brilliant preacher in London addressing about two hundred. A recent attempt to take a census of some of the congregations in Central London produced results so disconcerting that they could not be published. I am not going to reveal the details of the figures ; I will only say that five great Nonconformist churches in Central London

with sittings for about 6,500 people had, in the aggregate, about 1,000 worshippers. A writer in a religious paper who made a careful investigation in a South London suburb found capacious chapels almost deserted, and in one church there were seventeen women and children and four men. An even more disquieting fact is that the small existing congregations are extremely elderly. In a few years' time a large proportion of these congregations will be dead. What is to happen to the churches then? They will not be largely recruited from the Sunday schools, for the attendance at most of these schools has been falling rapidly for years, until to-day there are 1,663,000 fewer scholars in the Sunday schools than in 1906.

It is, of course, possible that some of the young people who are absent now will seek the consolations of religion when they discover that life is laborious, precarious and hostile. But at present the youth of the nation shows no signs of returning to the churches. It professes to find in the pulpits a dull level of passionless mediocrity, and it regards sermons with a wary scepticism. It dislikes pews and

harmoniums and hymns that are lugubrious, sentimental and unreal, it does not understand the vulgar rivalries of competitive denominationalism, and it is amused by pretentious and moribund officialism. It despises the petty squabbles of ecclesiastics, and finds their disputations quite unintelligible. It also holds that you can be a very good follower of Christ, softened by His love and guided by His teaching, and yet never go to church at all. It smiles at dogmas, is contemptuous of ritual and believes that religion is not a complex system of formulas and creeds but simply Christ's way of living. So it turns out that the Church, with its elaborate machinery, archaic phraseology and obscure and only half-believed creeds, has for the time being lost the youth of the nation.

Mr. Aldous Huxley thinks that we are living to-day in what is probably the most irreligious epoch of all history. I believe he is wrong. The neglect of the forms of religion does not necessarily mean that people are generally irreligious. It is true that millions of people have ceased to go to church and have no faith in the authority of bishops

or ecclesiastics or cautious, complacent "leaders," but many of them are convinced Christians. In spite of empty churches, Christianity counts for more to-day than ever before simply because men are beginning to see that they cannot do without it. They have tried everything else and been landed in disillusionment, disaster and despair. They see that mankind having ignored the teaching and spirit of Jesus has got the world into a ghastly and desperate mess. Men are tired of bitter and sterile controversy, but they are craving for spiritual satisfaction. There is plenty of promising material ready for the Churches when they have the sense and courage which will enable them to claim and guide it.

"The future of institutional Christianity," says the Bishop of Durham, "is becoming uncertain." He believes that we have come upon a period of disintegration and decline, and we have to face the question whether the Christian religion can survive the eclipse of the Christian Church. The Bishop of Worcester says that whereas his predecessors used to ordain 150 priests in a day, he in the

course of eight years has only ordained thirty-five. Crockford's "Clerical Directory" declares that "the backbone of the Church is being broken," and that in ten years' time, if the present conditions continue, the Church of England will have ceased to exist as a parochial system. It is said that the Free Church theological colleges are full, but the quality of the men who have come into the ministry during the last few years is none too high. Only a few years ago Central London had at least half a dozen great preachers, who attracted crowds of hearers. It is not so to-day. For two years there was not a single Congregational minister in Central London. Only two of the Congregational churches had ministers; one was a Presbyterian and the other a Baptist. "Organised Christianity," says Dean Inge, "is at present under a cloud. The Churches have but little influence, and if they had more would not know what to do with it."

Dr. W. B. Selbie declares that "when the pulpits of this country all speak the truth in love, and the men there are recognised as having open minds and clear convictions, then people

will begin to listen to them again as they are not listening to-day." The fact is that the pulpit has lost its power and authority because it has lost its certainty. A well-known Presbyterian minister has written a book in which he says of some of the Gospel stories that they " are simply Arabian Nights inventions." The Bishop of Birmingham and the minister of the City Temple agree that the story of Adam and Eve, their innocence and their fall, is folk-lore and not literal history, and that Darwin's triumph has shaken, if not destroyed, the whole theological scheme. One of the most distinguished of Wesleyan professors declares that the modern mind dismisses many Biblical stories, especially in the Old Testament, as legendary and worthless, and he adds that it is impossible to deny the presence of a legendary element in the Bible. A very sincere and trusted Nonconformist leader protests that he finds it impossible to believe the story of the feeding of the five thousand, and only the other day a London Congregational minister declared that he declined to accept, and totally disagreed with, some of the sayings of Jesus. Years

ago children were invited to put their pennies into the missionary box to enable missionaries to go out and tell the world about Jesus, yet quite recently some missionaries in India deliberately omitted the name of Jesus from hymns and prayers used in schools, and their action was supported by the London Board. It is no use shirking the fact that there is a general attitude of uncertainty among preachers, the result of which is that young people are inclined to ignore organised religion until it has come to some agreement as to what it believes and how much of the Bible it holds to be true.

Before the War faith in the orthodox creeds of Christianity was cooling ; since the War it seems to have almost vanished. Roman Catholicism has made enormous progress, but Protestantism has decayed. People have not gone over to Atheism or even Agnosticism ; they are merely indifferent and complacent, hoping that things will turn out all right in the end. In many of the countries of Europe Protestantism is fighting for its life. Owing to economic conditions there is a dearth of theological students, and the religious educa-

tion of children is hopelessly neglected. On the other hand, Roman Catholicism is showing astounding gains. For instance, in Germany eighty-eight Protestant institutions closed in 1923, while in the five years before that date the Roman Catholic Church opened 700 institutions.

Protestantism has suffered grave loss through denominationalism, with its distressing rivalries and wasteful overlapping. Some impression might be made upon the world by a great unified Church, but the action of isolated denominations is futile and feeble. The Rector of Trinity Church, in New York, in discussing the problem of divorce, says: "The Church cannot do much towards restricting divorce by legislation. We have too many kinds of religion and too much non-religion to make this possible." "Can we say," asks Dr. Parkes Cadman, "that the nation still looks to the clergy for leadership?" He declares that what the Church needs to-day is not money nor stately buildings, but preachers who have a real vital message. Protestantism in America is weak, uncertain and confused, and its leaders, like ours, talk solemnly and

pompously of "a grievous situation that demands attention," of "the materialistic age," and of "the profound social disturbances caused by the War"—but they never do anything very daring or effective. Nothing really practical or adequate is being done to-day to reach the non-churchgoer. We stumble along with hasty expedients and desperate experiments, and dope ourselves with pious anæsthetics. At our denominational assemblies we let off dazzling fireworks instead of building stronger foundations. "One of the grave defects of the majority of church leaders, and especially of ecclesiastics," says Dr. Charles Brown, "is that loyalty to the particular denomination is put in place of the supreme loyalty to the Lord and Master of us all." "Nonconformity," says another distinguished Free Church leader, "is living by its wits."

The problem of the Church to-day can be narrowed down to the problem of youth. The whole future of organised Christianity depends on whether it can capture the young. The Church, with its ageing groups of cautious, elderly men—so decorous and so dull—needs more than anything else glowing, driving

youthfulness. A great many young people feel the need more and more of spiritual sanctions and a vital religious faith. But they are not at all clear about sin, and they are staggered by the doctrine of the Fall of man; and what baffles them is that when preachers have discarded this doctrine they still seem to preach its implications. They also feel that the Church is no authentic guide as regards conduct, as it is always shifting its admonitions and discarding its prohibitions with the changing fashions of the times.

I wonder whether Christ would recognise the faith that we call Christian? Is it not true to say that Christianity in its organised and ecclesiastical forms differs fundamentally from the teaching of Jesus? He talked about loving God and one's neighbours, about showing mercy and doing justice, but He never said anything about the rites and ceremonies and dogmas over which ecclesiastics wrangled at Lausanne for three weeks last August. He carries His insistence on social justice and Christian service so far that the Last Judgment is apparently a separation between those who

fed the hungry and clothed the naked and ministered to the sick and the prisoners and those who refused or neglected to do any such thing. The Church has put the emphasis on belief; Jesus always puts it on conduct. As the result the people who go to church may believe more than those outside and do much less, and, on the whole, they are certainly not easier to live with. The Church will welcome a maker of the murderous implements of war or the exploiter of ill-paid labour if he subscribes to its creeds and its funds. Cannot we somehow get back to the simple, reasonable, searching teaching of Jesus and accept Him as the supreme moral authority?

Organised Christianity is not going to have an easy time during the next few years. Millions of the population have their whole thought and energy absorbed in the difficult problem of how they can keep body and soul together. People who dance until midnight on Saturday night are very unlikely to be in church on Sunday morning. They are too limp and listless. The radio will be more of a hindrance than a help, for if a man can hear a sermon with a pipe in his mouth and his feet

up on a chair, he is not likely to bother himself about going out to a chapel. Church treasurers are dead against the broadcasting of their ministers' sermons, for it means empty seats and reduced collections. Here, of course, the Roman Catholics have the advantage, for, as Dr. Orchard says, " you cannot broadcast the Sacrament."

Is there any way by which we can arrest the decline of organised religion ? One way would be for the Churches to become simply Christian—that is, to return to the primitive simplicity of Christianity as taught by Jesus. " I define Christianity as Christ," says the author of " The Christ of the Indian Road." If preachers recognised that religion is not the acceptance of a creed but faith in a Person, not a mere matter of intellectual assent but a new life, an inner vitality, a driving force, it would be impossible to keep youth out of the churches. Many other things could be done, but we might at least take note of the fact that although churches are to a large extent deserted by the young people, you will see them swarming into the Central Missions. This is not at all

surprising, for in the Central Halls they find comradeship, good music, many institutional activities, and an aggressive and heroic crusade for the evangelisation of the neighbourhood. Youth is always attracted by the spirit of passionate endeavour. It will not go into a decorous and inactive church, but it will join in a storming, battling campaign. It may be that this adventurous invasion of unconquered territory would prove the salvation of our churches to-day. We are too much occupied with the maintenance of our own machinery. We are not seeking and saving the lost—either because we do not believe they are lost or because we do not love the lost well enough to seek and save them.

A few years ago an Anglican clergyman who was editing an extremely evangelical religious paper, published Mr. Vachel Lindsay's remarkable and astounding poem, "General William Booth enters Heaven." It is a lurid and quite sensational description of the tumultuous welcome which General Booth received in Heaven from the criminals, fornicators, drunkards and prostitutes who had been saved through the Salvation Army.

There was a frightful row and the perplexed and surprised clergyman was nearly thrown out of his editorial chair. The evangelical readers of his paper evidently did not like to think that Heaven was inhabited by saved sots and converted harlots. They thought it was a respectable colony of blameless and well-to-do Plymouth Brethren. One of these days they will get the surprise of their lives.

XII THE ANVIL ON WHICH HAMMERS ARE BROKEN

THE Church is a divine institution worked by average human beings, some of whom are naturally and inevitably well-intentioned muddlers. That is the explanation of the Church's disabling limitations and invincible persistence. Jesus took the risk of building His Church on the average man knowing that we should sometimes let Him down. When the Church is feeble it is because we are feeble. When we realise our spiritual resources and have faith enough to draw upon them a revival of religion will dawn upon the world.

Organised religion is exposed in these days to very searching scrutiny, but much of the criticism levelled against it is thinly disguised praise. When the country is faced with an industrial crisis or some new moral peril we are accustomed to ask, rather fretfully, why the Church is not getting busy and doing

something about it. We never upbraid the members of night clubs for their futility in the face of social wrong. We do not call upon the Stock Exchange to set the world right. By our high expectations and exacting claims we pay the Church rather a noble compliment. It is true that organised Christianity speaks to the world with a hundred discordant voices, but I am not so much disturbed by the Church's divisions—which may be signs of brave, independent thinking—as I am by its occasional unanimity over issues that are comparatively unimportant if not ethically indefensible. During my lifetime I have only seen the Free Churches drawn together in well-organised unity on one occasion, and that was when they fought against the Education Act, a measure that stands unaltered to this day. I have only once seen the Anglican Church completely united, and that was in a formidable demonstration against the disestablishment and disendowment of the Welsh Church. And only once have all the churches, Established and Free, been firmly united, and that was in blessing and supporting the organised slaughter which mangled

and murdered millions of youths between 1914 and 1918. I have never seen organised Christianity thoroughly united in a great Evangelistic crusade or in protest against social injustice.

And yet, although the Church is divided, inactive and uncertain, with too much timidity in its leadership and too little astuteness in its management, it is the only instrument we have for the reconstruction of society and the redemption of the world. If it is nothing else, it is a monument to God. Its weakness is only in its human fellowship. It has no other weakness, for Jesus is in its midst—sorrowing no doubt over our failures and disloyalties—but still the guarantee that the Light shall never go out. The Church has survived many a period of depression and declension, and has made surprising and miraculous recoveries. It has come through storms of almost savage controversy. It has survived all the fires of persecution, all the enervating influences of social patronage, all the glaring inconsistencies of misguided followers, all the crippling restrictions of officialism, all the crafty opposition of a hostile

world, all the disconcerting candour of its friends. Dr. Orchard declares that after the most overwhelming catastrophe that could happen—after some smashing disaster which swept everything away, you would find a few surviving Wesleyan Methodists wandering amongst the ruins the next morning looking for a site for a new chapel. The Church is an anvil on which every hammer has been broken.

If our social system could be humanised and perfected and the world could become so well ordered that poverty and squalor and slums were completely swept away there would still remain sorrow and heartbreak and death, and we should be restless and dejected without Christ and His Church. I have heard Mr. W. L. Waights say that a perfectly sanitary, well-fed and well-housed world, without religion and the Church, would be very much like an efficient and up-to-date Zoo. Life to-day is disorderly and precarious—ask yourself what it would be like if the churches completely disappeared. Millions of people have gone to the Church with their weariness and tears and inarticulate hungers, and have seen a light streaming through the darkness.

And the Church is a necessary antiseptic in a world cruelly afflicted by the dull, banal, frowsy passion of the cinema. There is indeed nothing else to save us from a corroding materialism and a self-complacent cocksureness.

I question whether any agency has set up such a firm and effective barrier against moral decadence in England as the Nonconformist country chapel. It is no exaggeration to say that its influence has extended over the whole world. From these village chapels have come some of our ablest Labour leaders, many of our finest preachers and thousands of our best workers in great city churches and missions. And there are men and women who have attained to high and responsible positions in London and in America, Canada and Australia who will bear witness to the fact that it was under the tonic ministry of a country preacher that their faith was established, their character formed and their feet set firmly on the narrow, upward, difficult path. When I think of the most memorable sermons I have heard I discover that half of them were by obscure local preachers in out-of-the-way country towns and remote fishing villages. These

great little chapels are shabby, homely places, but the people who worship in them regard them with intense affection, for there they have found not only spiritual consolation and stimulus, but a joyous and satisfying comradeship. The ministers of village chapels often receive a lower wage than the scavengers who clean the city streets. They do not appear on the platforms of their denominational unions, their portraits are not published in the papers, their libraries are very limited, and their opportunities for recreation are few and far between. They are unhonoured except by the humble folk whom they serve with fidelity and affection.

I can never forget a Sunday evening I once spent in a village chapel in Wales. The building was exactly like a clumsily-built dog-kennel. I imagine that it would normally seat about eighty, but I happened to visit it on the occasion of the Sunday-school anniversary, and by means of forms and chairs brought from the school and neighbouring cottages at least two hundred of us were closely packed together. The windows were permanently sealed, the oil lamps were

confirmed smokers, and the air was foul almost to the point of asphyxiation. And yet for sheer, stark reality, for intoxicating joy, for driving spiritual power, I have never experienced anything like that service. With what ecstasy and abandon those people sang of Jesus and His love! The world had not given them very much, but Heaven had bestowed on them the divine gift of happiness. You saw nothing of the lethargy and lassitude that sometimes afflict suburban churches. To these country people religion was not an irksome restriction or a wearisome duty, or even a necessary discipline—it was an acceleration of life, a release from drab monotony, a glow, a glamour, a refuge and strength. They were drunk with the joy of the Lord.

Critics can always find material for cynical humour in the denominational barriers that divide the Church, and undoubtedly these rivalries are distressing and weakening. But seeing that the Churches embrace hundreds of millions of people in this world we might well expect cultural and racial differences. When you realise that in all the Churches there are choirs and committees and office-

bearers and sidesmen, with here and there an intolerant crank or a partially converted faddist or an obstinate Seventh Day Adventist or a rich Tory from Keswick who believes that every semi-colon in the Bible is Divinely inspired, you will see that it would require an almost incredible miracle to produce unanimity about anything. And yet if you mentioned Jesus they would all be united in adoration and love. We must be thankful that the present ecclesiastical divisions are not accepted as inevitable and permanent. The conscience of the Church is by no means easy about them.

Some years ago a man who disliked theologians, criticised the bishops, and was rather scornful of organised Christianity, suddenly joined a church. He was asked why he had done it. "Well," he replied, "a man has a right to choose his company." That may be considered an inadequate reason for joining a church, but I am not so sure. In a large area of our life we have to mix with all sorts of uncongenial and unsympathetic people, but when we join a church or a political party or a club, we deliberately choose our company. We choose the comradeship of people with

whom we can share common interests and ideals and enjoy bracing, unrestricted fellowship. We believe the people in the Church are on the right side, are seeking the best and aiming at the highest, and we take our stand by their side. Rich Nonconformists make a perilous blunder when they take their families to live in country houses far from a Free Church. Snobbish Nonconformists are fools when they desert their chapels because they want their daughters to make ambitious marriages. I have seen dreary tragedies follow the antics of these social climbers. My experience is that amongst the churches and the ministry of the churches it is possible to find the happiest and most exhilarating comradeship.

No Christian man who is alive and thinking can fail to be disturbed by the dwindling vitality of many of our churches to-day, by the rows of empty pews, by the drowsy acquiescence in social wrong, and the absence of the gay courage and daring audacity of youth. What can we do about it? Sir J. M. Barrie once made a memorable speech before a gathering of dramatic critics, and in referring

to his own plays, he said: "I wish I could write mine better, and I presume I am revealing no secrets when I tell you that the only reason I don't is because I can't. If there were any other reason I should deserve the contempt of every one of you." Can we—ministers, office-bearers, members and adherents of churches—can we say as much? Have we given "the utmost for the Highest"? Or have we been lukewarm, slovenly and indifferent?

XIII THE NEW PREACHING

THE most significant development in the preaching of the last twenty-five years has been the almost entire disappearance of the evangelistic appeal. After hearing a hundred sermons to-day you would be justified in coming to the conclusion that preachers no longer believe in conversion. Indeed, the best sermon on conversion that I have heard in years was Mr. Bernard Shaw's play, " The Shewing up of Blanco Posnet." There seems to be a general revulsion against the miraculous and the supernatural. The old preachers declared with certainty and fervour their belief in conversion as a conscious upheaval of the whole personality, a startling change of character, a process by which you could be delivered from the slavery of sin. Do our modern preachers believe this or do they reject it? They seldom say anything about it. Ministers

do not preach conversion, young people say they see no need for it, and I am told that Sunday schools no longer seek the conversion of the children.

"Surely," said an ex-chairman of one of our denominational unions to me a few years ago, "surely you don't believe in conversion?" I replied that I was driven to believe in it, for I had seen the incredible thing happen. I have seen a waspish virago become a perfect dear. I have known men, converted in the Salvation Army, who from the very dregs of the gutter rose to be leaders in social and Christian crusades. I have listened to the stories of men converted at the Water Street Mission in New York—men who had spent years in jail, men who in their despair had tried to drown themselves in the river and who for twenty years and more had been clean, honest, happy citizens.

Now the preachers of a couple of decades ago used to expect conversions, preach for them, and get them. The modern preacher does not seem to expect conversions; he has ceased to talk about them, and he would be rather embarrassed if they occurred. Some

years ago, during a mission in a large Congregational church in the North of London, several fallen women—or perhaps I should say victims of fallen men—came in one night and got converted. The minister simply did not know what on earth to do with them. In his extremity he appealed to the Salvation Army and the Roman Catholics, and these good people, being quite used to poor sinners, came to his rescue and took the women off his hands. I fear that some of our churches would be strangely helpless to-day in the presence of sinners. "Not every one who comes here is converted," says the vicar of an East End church to his visitors, "so mind your pockets." I must confess that I rather like that kind of church.

This is how a distinguished and popular preacher of world-wide reputation talks to a man who cries out from the depths for salvation from sin: "Begin your return journey to the realm of self-respect by admiring the qualities of character you wish to possess. Think of and endeavour to emulate them constantly. The logic of so simple a recommendation is that you always approximate in

character to the thing you admire. So make a mental picture gallery of lofty personalities and learn to venerate their self-denial, their honesty, their faith, and their power of will. When your veneration has provoked many spontaneous prayers that you may be included in that gallery yourself you will gradually sense the growth of your nobler life. Instead of self-pity there will be self-control, and weakness will give place to a feeling of power." So that's how it's done! I am reluctant to criticise this message, for I know the author, and I am quite certain that he is honest and sincere. But I cannot see such a gospel—if you can call it a gospel—turning a sot into a saint, or a criminal into a Christian.

Why ministers have ceased to preach about conversion it is difficult to say. It is possible that they may have been scared by the crude performances of professional and profiteering evangelists. A more likely reason is that the people having lost all sense of sin there is nothing to appeal to. All that can be done is to speak to the deep and universal craving of humanity for some spiritual satisfaction. For this craving does exist, and, in spite of

appearances to the contrary, the souls of men are deeply disturbed. Francis Thompson was not far wrong when he suggested that God's method of dealing with wayward and fugitive souls is rather like the pursuit of a celestial hound. Preachers will not find it difficult to get a hearing if they deal with the fundamental disquietudes of the human spirit. I wish we could say of all preachers what a journalist said of a saintly American minister: "He found virtue interesting and made it infectious."

What young people—and for that matter people of all ages—are asking for to-day is an explanation and interpretation of life. They do not always get it from the pulpit, and it is this lack in our modern preaching of a vital philosophy of life that makes so many churchgoers easy victims of freak religions, of despairing cynicism and of a careless hedonism. One Sunday morning I met a man who seemed irritable and depressed. It turned out that he had just heard a very crude and irrelevant sermon. The preacher had spent three-quarters of an hour in an attempt to prove that Jesus was born in Nazareth and not in

Bethlehem. "As if I cared where He was born!" exclaimed my friend. "What I want to find out is this: Is He in Oxford Street to-day? Does He care anything about me? Will He help me to run straight?" Years ago the Church was confined within a narrow and excessive individualism, and largely ignored the social gospel. Now she has swung round to the opposite extreme and has more to say about social environment than about individual need. You can never convert people in the mass because you can never standardise religious experience. Conversion is a personal and individual experience, and yet how many Protestant ministers personally deal with individuals? Dr. Charles Brown says that a minister who cannot or will not engage in pastoral visitation and seek to live in the life of his people and his neighbourhood has no business in the ministry. Some months ago Gandhi visited a leper colony at Orissa and gave an address. But he is never satisfied to be merely a preacher—he went round afterwards to the poor stricken lepers and shook hands and conversed with them. This seemed to him quite the natural thing to do. "Why

should I call them my brothers," he said, " if I do not mix with them ? "

The Nonconformist preachers of to-day are sincere, talented, deft, workmanlike, but they seldom quicken the pulse or stir the heart. Their technique is flawless, but some of them seem paralysed by a lack of certainty. They have no divine confidence, no holy violence, no intoxicating enthusiasm. If only something would sweep them off their feet ! A preacher who is doubtful about miracles, who is not certain about conversion, who believes in the divinity of Christ but adds : " Yes, He was divine and so am I," and who holds that prayer is ineffective outside the spiritual realm may be a good, sincere and able man, a man to be admired and respected for his intellectual integrity, but when he speaks to burdened, anxious, distressed souls is he not at some disadvantage ? What is he going to offer them except a rather colourless appeal for ethical respectability, which leaves them cold and hungry ? It is possible to rationalise religion to death. " There is nothing on earth more certain," says Mr. Robert Lynd, " than that miracles happen. In the twentieth century

bishops try to explain them away. But we must not allow our faith to be shaken by bishops."

Many clergymen of the Church of England are talented little gentlemen who deliver tepid little sermons about rites and sacraments and the authority of the Church. And when you hear them you know why the power of the pulpit has declined and why the Church has lost its confident stride and is now a diminishing factor in the life of the community. Their sermons never sting or stab. You would get far more vivid and stimulating talk from a Salvation Army captain at some street corner. Imagine that one day when you are extremely hungry you go into a restaurant and discover that all it has to offer you is a lecture on cookery. You know how you would feel. Well, that is how I feel when I come out from some churches to-day.

Nothing is more pathetic to me than the sight of a crowd of people looking up at a preacher with a wistful gaze of interrogation, their sad, imploring eyes signalling for help—tired, lonely, baffled, blundering people, thinking of their impossible dreams and humiliating

failures, asking whether the man perched up in that ridiculous box has any clue to the mystery, wondering whether he can help them, show them some good in life, tell them that there is something to hold on to, that it is possible to know God, and that existence is not a mere meaningless muddle. If he is a wise good man he will lead them straight to Jesus, the hope and herald of better days. We have buried Him in creeds, frozen Him in dogmas, shelved Him for four years of appalling manslaughter. A money-ridden, pleasure-mad world has tried to crowd Him out. But it is no good. He is quite inescapable. He is not an easy Master to follow, for He completely reverses some of our fixed and treasured ideas. We are afraid of poverty—He is afraid of wealth. We think we are only safe when we have a sword. He says that those who take the sword shall perish by the sword. He does not promise us a quiet life. "He stirreth up the people" was the complaint made at His trial, and it is true that He makes us feverishly discontented with a selfish and materialistic society. We shall never know genuine happiness or lasting

satisfaction without Him. Undoubtedly if we forget or reject Him we are lost. He is the one and only hope of the world.

Mr. J. A. Spender says that whoever tries to break loose from tradition and to read the Gospels in their simplicity finds it flashing in on him that they are daring, original, paradoxical and revolutionary as no other religious literature in the world. " Yet," he says, " this explosive material is mostly in the hands of men of quiet and conservative disposition who consider conformity to the existing order to be a high virtue. It is small wonder if some of them avert their gaze from the Christian ethic and find refuge in preaching what is said to be the doctrine of the Church." This, of course, is the way to a quiet life, but the last thing a Christian preacher should desire is a quiet life. If he really wants to grip this new age he will not worry much about sacraments and dogmas. He will preach Christianity not as a system of thought but as a way of living, and he will be candid and fearless and avoid foggy equivocation and vague ambiguity. He will face all the staggering and revolutionary implications of Christ's teaching, especially as

regards money and war. No doubt a few of the older and richer people who want to forget about war and slums and hungry miners will depart disgruntled and beat an indignant retreat. But there are churches where they can be comfortably wrapped in cotton-wool and enjoy the undisturbed serenity of the prematurely dead. For every reactionary objector who seeks a well-upholstered ease there will arrive a hundred young men and women, fascinated and gripped by the personality of Jesus and eager to apply His teaching to the traffic of the world, the problems of government and the perplexing, exacting art of living.

XIV THE WORSHIP OF MAMMON

ALTHOUGH the nineteenth century found a smug satisfaction in material comfort and economic security, its life was marked by a certain dignity and simplicity, and it was never money-ridden or money-mad as we are to-day. Mammon now rules supreme. The nineteenth century honestly tried to serve God and mammon. It wanted to treat both with scrupulous fairness. The twentieth century refuses to divide its loyalties—it has forgotten God and concentrated on money as the most important thing in the world. Money was once a convenient medium of exchange—it is now master and king. There is no particular zest for earning money—a rather slow and laborious process—but there is a passion to " make " it, to hire it out and exact interest and dividends on it. " Among the psychological elements which have been

coordinated in the modern success-personality," says Mr. Aldous Huxley, " the most important are the acquisitive tendencies. These have been moralised not by any process of sublimation but by a simple reversal of values. *What was previously black is now called white.* Covetousness, which was a deadly sin in the days of our mediæval ancestors, is now one of the cardinal virtues."

Money has brought us more machine-made efficiency and less gay romanticism—more speed and less freedom, more comfort and less culture. Once a man took his pipe and his satchel and tramped into the country, finding infinite rapture in the glories of nature—now he buys a motor-car and rushes through two or three beautiful counties and is rather bored. Money breeds economic conflict and leads to wasteful and disastrous wars. If money is any assistance to a political party the Liberals ought to have enjoyed amazing prosperity, for they had millions. But Mr. Garvin gave them sound advice when he told them that if they wanted to save their souls and recover their power they had better take the money out in a boat and bury it in the sea.

You will generally notice that a man who inherits wealth knows that it did his father very little good, and consequently he does not expect to get much out of it himself. But the man who has made money nearly always makes certain mistakes as well. And his two biggest blunders are these: first, he believes that he is an amazingly clever fellow with much more ability than those who have failed to accumulate money—and this does not follow at all, for wealth is never an index of worth. And, secondly, he thinks the possession of a great deal of money is going to mean complete and durable happiness. That delusion is soon exploded, because he discovers, to his consternation, that happiness cannot be bought, and he also notices people around him who have very slender means and yet are much happier than he is himself. Still the glittering delusion persists, and a great majority of the people in this country would sooner have money than anything else simply because they have the erroneous idea that when you acquire money you are able to command every delight and satisfaction that the heart can desire. And nothing, of

course, is farther from the truth. The rich man can avoid a few of life's disturbances and privations and tiresome inconveniences—he cannot avoid its uncertainty or its brevity. Practically all the very rich people I have known have suffered very badly from disillusionment, satiety and boredom. They have comfortable houses and swift motor-cars and bulging bank books, but they are looking around wistfully for something that will bring rest to their weary souls. Some of them are puzzled, lonely, fatigued dyspeptics. Mr. T. P. O'Connor has known most of the great capitalists in England and America, and he says that "few of them appear to me to get much out of life." "Summer," said a wandering American once, "summer, a pair of shoes that don't nip anywhere, and five dollars in my pocket, and I'm happy enough."

The Church has always condemned worldliness, and is perfectly right in doing so, but it has never quite understood what worldliness is. It used to think that worldliness consisted in dancing, card-playing and theatre-going. Yet a man might indulge in all these occupations and still be a very unworldly person,

devoted to art and beauty and romance and inspired by the finest idealism. While, on the other hand, some of the most worldly men I have ever known never danced or went to theatres or played cards—sometimes they did not even smoke—but they worshipped mammon, loved money, were greedy for possessions, cared nothing for music or books, and certainly had no sense of humour. They dwelt in big, ugly, stuffy houses from which their sons and daughters escaped at the earliest opportunity. The Church holds that we cannot serve God and mammon, but all the same it has tried to do it. It pays an exaggerated respect to wealth and allows itself to be too much dominated by those who are wealthy. Jesus undoubtedly regarded riches as the chief hindrance to man's spiritual progress, and while, as Mr. Middleton Murry has pointed out, Jesus did not denounce the possession of wealth so much as the attachment to it, He certainly believed that the possession of wealth involved the attachment to it. That is exactly where the danger lies. A man gradually comes to trust money and rely on it instead of trusting and relying

on God. He is possessed by his possessions.

Many people think of the United States as the place where mammon is most devotedly worshipped, and yet it is a fact that a love of beauty is quietly stealing into American commerce. I know that Henry Ford once declared that he would not give five cents for all the art the world had produced. But he cannot stop other business men from coming under the sway of the new cult of Beauty. Artists have designed the shape and colour of motor-cars, shops are furnished with exquisite taste, sky-scrapers which might have been towers of ugliness have become dreams of fantastic beauty, even factories are architecturally pleasing and frequently have lovely landscaped grounds, and there are railway stations that are marble temples. Somehow in England hard-headed industrialists seem to have no eye for beauty—indeed, they are often suspicious of it. They worship mammon, and believe that it is quite possible for men to live by bread alone.

Mr. Arnold Bennett, who, if he does not worship mammon, regards it with sincere

respect, says that the first duty of a poet is not to write poetry, but to provide for his old age. "All for love and the world well lost," would sound like sentimental tosh to this competent and businesslike craftsman. It is difficult to imagine what this world would have been like but for its romantic artists, its unworldly musicians and its poets, who had the divine fire, even if they were defective in financial foresight.

There is something strangely blind and perverse about this money business. Money congeals in fantastic sums in one man's possession until he dies and goes away and leaves it, while it coldly avoids another man who would be warmed and cheered by a few odd pounds. I read the other day that a canon of the Church of England had died leaving nearly £400,000. I am thinking of that white-robed figure standing at the lectern and reading—if he ever had the nerve to recite the words in public—"How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God." Then I take up another paper and I read of a Baptist minister in a London suburb who has committed suicide.

His son said he had been worried and depressed by financial difficulties. For the last seventeen months he had been unable to obtain an appointment.

When I was last in New York I heard of a little Salvation Army girl who had been working amongst the toughs in the Bowery. This sweet, frail slip of a girl had laid down her life in the service of the unsavoury inhabitants of this dark district. When officers of the Salvation Army become popular and successful it is the general rule to remove them somewhere else. So this gay little creature received her marching orders. Being thoroughly disciplined she did not protest, although she loved the unruly people in the evil-smelling slums. But the Bowery toughs got together and drew up one of the most pathetic documents I have ever read, begging that she should not be taken away. She had trusted them, helped them when they seemed irrecoverably lost, saved them sometimes from man's inhumanity, brought incredible brightness and colour into their sombre lives, and they shuddered at the thought of losing her. She had chosen to serve God rather than

mammon, and had surrendered her life unreservedly to His service, and I seriously suggest that she is more to be envied than the slaves of mammon who can buy everything except human love and divine satisfaction. A New York journalist was telling me one night of a talk he had had with the little Salvationist. I said: "Very happy, I suppose?" "Radiantly happy," he replied, "and with a happiness you never see in financial magnates or clever hedonists." "Why can't we all learn the secret?" I asked. "Ah!" he said, "we're too stubborn and proud." The world is paying a heavy price to-day for its rejection of Christ's teaching. And yet He has done His best to show us the way. Here and there brave, unsophisticated souls surrender to His lordship and discover spiritual wealth that is inexhaustible.

And while I was thinking of this little Salvation Army lass I opened Mr. Herbert Gibbons' enormous biography of John Wanamaker (it costs two guineas), and I read the terse, laconic opening sentence: "John Wanamaker *earned money for seventy-five years.*"

I suppose most people would regard John Wanamaker, the millionaire owner of gigantic department stores, as a brilliant and spectacular success, and a pretty girl who joined the Salvation Army and threw her life away down in the Bowery as an obscure and pathetic failure. Well, I don't know. It is just possible that the invisible, inaudible spiritual world may be the only reality.

XV THE MOVIES AND THE WIRELESS

WHEN a modern girl says she wants to see the " pickchers " (for, alas ! that is how she often talks) she is not proposing to feast her soul on the eternal genius of the old masters ; she wants to excite herself with the sticky sentiment and the wild melodrama of the " movies." Thirty years ago if she had been very good she would have been taken to the National Gallery and the South Kensington Museum. Now she does not wait to be taken anywhere ; she spends the money earned in an office on frequent visits to the cinema or the Palais de Danse. I confess that I have never got very much satisfaction out of the celluloid drama, but it has such an extraordinary hold on vast masses of people that there must be something in it. In this country twenty millions of people go to " the pickchers " every week, which means that

practically the whole population goes in a fortnight. Some people must go rather often, for I know a great many who never go at all.

I remember seeing the first moving pictures shown in London, and very spotty and jerky and flickering they were. But astonishing progress was made—especially in America—and before long, by tireless industry and perseverance, creditable and attractive films were produced, and the new form of amusement spread over the whole world. The influence of the movies can hardly be exaggerated, for, as a friend of mine in Chicago says, " you have heard of something going in at one ear and out at the other, but you never heard of anything going in at one eye and out at the other." Undoubtedly the cinema has had a disturbing, and sometimes a degrading, effect on the life and habits of the people.

Most of the films I have seen were mawkish and tawdry, if not disconcerting and repellent, but I have enjoyed at least two great and noble productions. The demand is, of course, enormous and has to be supplied, and films

have to be made to suit the immature taste of the great masses of the people. But it is pathetic to see clever acting, brilliant production and boundless enterprise thrown away on foolish, boring and vulgar stories. I have no doubt that in time vast improvements will be carried out; titles will probably be abolished and the greatest authors in the world will supply scenarios. Mr. Shaw has strongly resisted all attempts to secure his work for the pictures, but at last he has allowed " St. Joan " to be filmed, and, having once taken the plunge, he will no doubt permit the immense public that crowds the cinemas to see his other plays. Some of the works of Sir James Barrie and Mr. Thomas Hardy have been filmed, but in one or two cases they were rather clumsily revised. An immense amount of knowledge, enterprise and capital has been lavished on this new industry, and we may hope that one day a great genius will emerge who will purge the movies of the mischievous and the trivial and give them a higher artistic and educational value. But we cannot close our eyes to the fact that the movie theatre is often a moral

peril, especially to the young who form a large majority of the audiences. You need not go inside to know this. The posters and photographs exhibited outside show that many films are characterised by a subtly-veiled lasciviousness. Such pictures must defile the mind even if they have no degrading effect on conduct.

It is an amazing thing to me that the leaders of organised Christianity have not had the foresight and energy to take hold of the films and use them as a vehicle of religious propaganda. There is probably no more powerful method for influencing public opinion in the world to-day, and yet religious leaders have so far made no attempt to capture it for the churches. Special films have been produced in America for use in churches—one of them was shown recently on a Sunday night in Dr. Cadman's church in Brooklyn—and there is nothing that I know of, except laziness and inertia, to prevent the churches of England and America from uniting in a well-organised scheme for the production of motion pictures with a definitely Christian and inspirational message.

That very interesting picture, " The King of Kings," over which there was so much controversy in this country, has been shown in London, New York, Paris and Berlin, and has attracted vast crowds of people. It is, I think, a sincere and not altogether unsuccessful attempt to present the beauty and majesty of the character and teaching of Jesus. Here the cinema has a distinct advantage over the theatre, inasmuch as it can portray the figure of Jesus with dignity and reverence, while no actor would be allowed to represent the character on the stage. In " The King of Kings " there are episodes that are open to criticism, and modernists have objected to the emphasis on the miraculous, but one night I stood at the door of the New York theatre and watched the people going in, joking and laughing like any other crowd of amusement seekers, and three hours later I saw them come out, silent and thoughtful, awed and subdued, with a look of wonder and wistful inquiry in their tear-stained eyes.

In America the moving pictures constitute the eighth great industry, and the weekly attendance at movie theatres is about fifty

millions. Over £124,000,000 was paid in admissions during 1926. There are 50,000 movie theatres in the world, 20,000 of which are in America. Some of the cinemas in New York are palaces of incredible beauty and magnificence. Two of them have over 6,000 arm-chairs, and one has a symphony orchestra of 110 and the largest organ in the world. The economic effects of American films are to be seen all over the world. In the most remote countries American trade follows the film. There is, I think, a certain danger in presenting to backward races pictures which reveal the corruption and hypocrisy of Western civilisation. If in recent years the West has lost its prestige in the Orient it is largely due to the effect of sensational American films.

Some of the great American films are produced on an enormous scale. I once motored through the extensive Santa Maria valley, in California, which was given up for months to the making of those two great pictures, " The Covered Wagon " and " The Ten Commandments." For the latter picture 2,500 people lived in this beautiful valley

for eight months and were comfortably accommodated in specially erected hostels. One day at Hollywood I walked into a huge studio and found myself facing snow mountains. As I came nearer I discovered that they were made of cardboard and paper and were erected for a new picture, one short scene of which was laid in Switzerland. In another studio I stood looking with amazement at the Cathedral of Notre Dame, with its carving, colouring and windows reproduced with absolute accuracy. It was nothing but canvas and paint. In perseverance and efficiency the moving picture producers are an example to the whole world. When I was in Hollywood one scene was repeated nineteen times, although when it appeared on the screen it did not occupy thirty seconds. A scene that had cost £6,000 was thrown out altogether.

There is a pathetic side to the movie industry at Hollywood. When I arrived at Los Angeles—which is quite near—I was impressed by the striking beauty of the waitresses and chamber-maids. In America domestic work is generally performed by foreigners of rather homely appearance. But

here even the laundry-maids were American girls of fascinating appearance. The explanation is that all over the United States thousands of girls go movie-mad. They are impressed by the fabulous salaries paid to film stars; they believe they have film faces; they save up their money, give up their jobs, and go down to Hollywood in the certain hope that they will capture the producers with their dazzling beauty and genius and become film stars overnight. When they arrive they find thousands of other girls who have been waiting for months to pick up a few dollars a week. Their savings soon dribble away, and rather than pocket their pride and go home they take lowly jobs in the hope that one day a passing producer may notice them and detect gifts of beauty and intelligence that will make their fortunes.

Broadcasting must have been a perfect godsend to lonely people in obscure villages, to sick people in hospitals, and to the aged and infirm who are imprisoned indoors. I confess that I am not impressed by its canned music and tinned talk, its jazz bands and facetious "uncles," but I recognise that I

might find it a blessed resource if I were shut in by illness or isolated on a lightship. In listening to the songs and speeches you miss, of course, the impact of something quite indefinable which we call personality. The use of the wireless is becoming so common that we no longer feel any sense of wonder over its marvellous achievements and its boundless possibilities. Its very cheapness and success limit our amazement. Some years ago I was sitting talking to a friend on an Atlantic liner, when a steward brought him a wireless message. "What's that?" inquired his daughter. "A wireless," he replied. "But," she complained, "it looks just like an ordinary telegram." "What did you think it would be," asked her father, "a streak of lightning?"

It is almost impossible to explain the wireless. Even an expert operator cannot tell you exactly how it works. I remember once on a great liner going up to see the wireless man about a message I wanted to send over 1,500 miles of sea to a New York hotel, and we began talking of the marvel and mystery of his work. He told me how he

sat up in a little room on the top deck receiving messages for passengers from their homes and offices, instructions for the captain from the offices of the company, important tidings from other ships, and the news of the whole world to be printed in to-morrow's issue of the ship's paper; and at the same time, of course, constantly sending out communications to London. New York and ships far away. And then he said in a rather shy boyish way: "You know, there's one thing about this wireless—I don't know whether you ever thought of it, but it occurs to me sometimes—it makes it awfully easy to believe in prayer." In the minds of many small boys to-day there is a close connection between the wireless and prayer. A little fellow in America was kneeling at his bedside saying his prayers, and he was heard to conclude as follows: ". . . and help me to be a good boy. This is Jimmy Jones signing off. I'll be on the air again to-morrow night at seven-thirty."

XVI TRAVEL AND THE MOTOR-CAR

DURING the last few years, with the increasing distaste for home life, and the passion for living in public, there has come an enormous increase in travel. Ask any tourist agent what business is like, and he will give you a smile of complete satisfaction. He has never had such a good time. There is on the part of most people an incurable longing to escape —they don't quite know what from or what to—but they must be moving on. Tumultuous crowds of Americans flow from New York to France and England; immediately Canadians and Australians make money they go to Europe to spend it, while English people continually pack the boats and trains on their way to all parts of the Continent. More and more we want to go somewhere quickly. You may say this shows that we are as decadent as the youth of Rome when they indulged in

mad and exciting chariot races along the Appian Way. But there it is—and the motor-car is chiefly responsible for it. There is a craze for locomotion, for change, a craving to move on to new pleasures and rush to new thrills. It may be that the restless human race was always keen on movement, for there were wagons, stage coaches, pony carts, railways and bicycles—but the speed and excitement were accelerated with the coming of the luxurious liner, the automobile and the aeroplane.

There are two strange facts concerning the motor-car. America did not invent it, and as late as 1905 Great Britain actually had more cars than the United States. There was a time in England when you could not go out in a motor-car unless a man walked in front with a red flag. And even in 1906 there was in New York an ordinance which stipulated "that the mayor might issue licences to persons for keeping for hire horseless carriages propelled by electricity, but such horseless carriages had to be equipped with bells to give warning of their approach." It is not very long since Dr. Campbell was preaching

on Thursdays at the City Temple, and yet I remember calling for him there one Thursday and taking him down to a preaching engagement at Woodford in a motor-car which no one would accept as a gift to-day. Yet a rich man—and only rich men could have cars in those days—had given £1,500 for it. It was built like a waggonette, and the passengers had to climb in through a sort of trap-door at the back. It required as much attention and coaxing as a sick baby, it sometimes staggered and occasionally died. About that time fifteen cars started on a race to Brighton, and only five of them arrived. A man who went out on an automobile journey would send a telegram to his wife at the first stop to tell her, to her infinite relief, that he was still alive. Once a restricted luxury of the rich, the motor-car is now the common delight of the moderately prosperous and even of the poor. The other day I was lunching in London with an American who has sudden and inexplicable impulses. All at once he wanted to have tea by the sea, and said he would go in a taxi! It seemed to me a wild thing to do, but it turned out an extra-

ordinary success. We picked up a taxi in the Strand (look out for one with flowers inside, said my observant friend, that means that the driver owns it), went down to Brighton, had our tea on a veranda looking over the sea, and were back in London for dinner.

The motor-car is probably the most important industrial development of the last thirty years. It began in a small way in Germany, but little progress was made until the idea was taken up in France towards the end of the last century. About 1910 the United States began to take the lead in motor-car production, and by 1925 more than half of all the families in America had their own car, and 83 per cent. of all the cars in the world were owned in the United States. The making of motor vehicles is now the greatest manufacturing industry in that country. In America to-day there are over twenty-two million cars—one for every five inhabitants—so that the whole of the population could, if it liked, take to the road at one time in gas-propelled vehicles. In Canada there is one car to every eleven inhabitants, in New Zealand one to twelve, in Australia one to seventeen, and in Great

Britain one to forty-five. In England the increasing use of motor lorries for carrying freight, together with the ever-advancing popularity of the char-â-banc for excursions and for touring, has proved a formidable and embarrassing rival to the railways. In 1909 there were 8,000 commercial motor vehicles on our roads ; last year there were 400,000.

But the motor-car is not an unmixed blessing. It has made burglary easy and safe. It has ruined the health of thousands of people by depriving them of the exhilarating exercise of walking. What used to be a quiet country stroll is now a death-defying adventure. In America more people have been killed by automobiles during the last eight years than were lost by the American army in the war —that is to say, 137,000 were killed by motor-cars, while the deaths in the American army were 120,000. The injured in automobile accidents in eight years in the United States numbered three and a half millions. Last year 10,000 London children were killed or injured by motor traffic. The roads in all great capitals are becoming highways of danger and death, and the only remedy is the

compulsory elimination of the untrained driver. At present a man who has never driven a motor-car in his life can get a licence for five shillings. Most of the accidents occur on Sunday, because on that day the untrained, inexperienced owner-driver comes out in his thousands. In any sudden emergency the unskilful driver, with his slow awareness and his dull or nervous mentality, finds himself at the mercy of something quicker and more powerful than himself, and then there is the deadly smash. And, of course, some motorists get drunk.

The progress of aviation to-day is just as rapid and sure as the advance of motoring twenty years ago, and air travel will probably become safe, regular and commonplace within the next decade. Just over twenty-four years ago Mr. Orville Wright, an American who is still alive, flew for twelve seconds in a queer machine made of wood and fabric. Since then men have remained in the air for more than two days and nights. Instead of the few hundred feet registered by Wright they have gone 4,000 miles without a stop. The first flight attained a maximum height of

ten feet. Since then machines have reached an altitude of about seven miles. There is a reliable daily service between New York and Boston, with breakfast and dinner served on board. You are called early at your New York hotel, you drop into a motor-car, and in a few minutes you are enjoying your breakfast 10,000 feet in the air while travelling at a hundred miles an hour. There are already four thousand landing fields in America, and no doubt before long every town of any size in England will have its municipal aerodrome. In Berlin the aeroplanes queue up regularly at concrete platforms, like taxis, and fly off to distant cities every few minutes. The passengers stroll up with their suit-cases, take their seats, and read magazines or go to sleep. One of these days aeroplanes will be leaving Hyde Park all day long for the great cities and for the Continent, and the tedious journey to the Croydon aerodrome will be a thing of the past. But so far this country has been completely outstripped in aerial locomotion by Germany, Holland and Sweden. In some parts of Europe to-day you can buy at newspaper stalls and bookshops regular Air

Time Tables. One of these contains 225 pages, and gives the time of arrival and departure of aeroplanes on every line in Europe, with price of tickets and cost of freight transportation. The next stage in the progress of aviation will be the private aeroplane. You can buy a very good one now for £750. It is inexpensive to run, but it will do a hundred miles an hour and rise to 18,000 feet. It can be stored at any aerodrome for 2s. 6d. a night, and its petrol consumption is about twenty miles per gallon. It is quite possible that in another twenty-five years the aeroplane may solve the traffic problem. There may then be more aeroplanes above than motor-cars below. They will probably land on the roof-top or in the back garden. It is a significant fact that the study of aviation has recently been made compulsory in Russian schools, and now, even in quite small schools, model aeroplanes are provided, and the children are instructed in the rudiments of aero-dynamics.

As regards travelling by sea, the tendency in recent years has been to reduce speed rather than to increase it. The fastest ship on the

Atlantic to-day is twenty years old. This check to any advancing speed is chiefly caused by the high cost of coal and oil. But as regards comfort and safety sea travel has made extraordinary progress. I know of no place in the world where you can get more solid and satisfying comfort than on a great ocean liner ; a cynical friend of mine says that this is because all the work on a ship is done by men ! Years ago life was comparatively safe on land, but very risky at sea, and a man who went on a voyage regarded it as a rather desperate adventure, only to be undertaken at the call of urgent duty or remunerative business, and on arrival he immediately dispatched a cable to his wife to relieve her anxiety and let her know that he had survived the perils of the deep. To-day a man is glad to forsake the dangers of the streets and find himself enjoying the security and stability of a big liner. Sir Arthur Rostron, the captain of the *Berengaria*, says that before long sailors when they leave port will cable their families that they are safe and sound aboard ship.

XVII WHERE ARE WE GOING?

It is quite evident that the people of this country have adopted new and dangerous ways of living. During the last twenty years we have seen changes so violent and drastic in habits, conventions and morals, that to the older people the world now seems transitory and unreal. Young people may not notice anything extraordinary about this new era, for they have known no other. But they will certainly see further disturbances and re-arrangements of human society, for the conditions under which we are living have no real permanence or stability and the movement of life is not to be arrested. If we were wise we should live more quietly and simply, more actively and austerely; but we are not wise and it is possible that society, having lost its faith, discarded its loyalties and repudiated its restraints, may become more tawdry,

irresponsible and insecure. At present I can see no signs of any improvement. I can only see dangerous conflict and shifting confusion.

We have to face the persistent menace of war, new relations between the sexes, feverish frivolity and wasteful luxury and much disorderly living, an evaporating faith, a Church that has lost its moral ascendancy, and a tendency on the part of some industrialists to impoverish and exasperate labour. Nothing but a vital religion can release us from our fears, deliver us from our vulgar self-indulgence and our moral collapse and bring us freedom and happiness. It is a time for brave thinking and plain speaking. We may as well face the fact that life is going to be a very risky and exacting business for most people and for a long time to come.

Dean Inge thinks that the events of the last twelve years have been, almost without exception, unfavourable to the position and prospects of this country. As a matter of fact, the prestige of England began to decline at the time of the Boer War—when we were using all the resources of the Empire to fight a small army of religious farmers, and English

gentlemen used to drink "to Buller and damnation to the Boers." At the end of the last century we used to say of anything that seemed new and surprising and rather shocking that it was *fin de siècle*. But the new century plunged us into a welter that we never anticipated, and the roaring lions of 1899 would be bleating lambs to-day. We used to talk with some pride and complacency of the privilege of enjoying the stability and security of "Christian lands." But it was the Christian nations that were rushed helpless into mass murder, killed each other for four years, and then engaged in pitiless economic hostilities. And to-day all the Christian nations are preparing poisons for the massacre of non-combatants in the next war—which simply means, of course, that civilised people deliberately contemplate a return to savagery. To-day newspapers pay enormous prices for articles by notorious ex-convicts and, from the commercial point of view, show that they know their business, for a million new readers rush to buy up every available copy. We know that England is finding life threatening, confusing and insecure, yet there is a very excellent

guide to life easily procurable in all kinds of editions and at a great variety of prices. Is England reading it ? Here is the answer from the report of a Committee appointed by the Board of Education on the teaching of English : " At the present time the Bible is less widely read and less directly influential in our life and literature than it has been at any time since the Reformation."

There are bright spots here and there. Drunkenness is disappearing and education has been vastly improved. Leisure has been increased and life has been prolonged. Village life has been largely transformed. Feudalism has disappeared and the power of the country squire is broken. No longer do village maidens curtsy to the wives of the squire and the vicar. Wireless, the cinema, the motor-bicycle and dancing have invaded the most isolated villages. There is a sharpened intelligence and a higher standard of living.

But the old English energy and persistent stubbornness seem to have disappeared. We no longer hold our own in games. One of the most significant and menacing changes of the last few years is the loss of pride and

tenacity and initiative. We seem to be suffering from exhaustion and inertia. The old clear-cut cleavage between right and wrong is fading away. Moral standards have been revised and lowered. There is a loss of faith in Parliamentary institutions and in political leaders. Will the monarchy survive this time of turmoil and change? Dean Inge seems doubtful whether it will outlive the present century.

Let us face the situation. Scientific knowledge has been popularised and religious faith is failing; there is an increasing friction and suspicion between classes; home life has suffered serious deterioration, partly as the result of the habit of living in flats; war is seen to be futile and unprofitable, and this has led to a loss of confidence in the governments that make wars and in the churches that support them: women have thrown over conventions which a few years ago were considered essential and obligatory; sex problems are discussed with outspoken frankness; authority in religion is not only questioned, but repudiated; and youth is sophisticated and intractable.

Is the game up? Not at all. To debate questions of sex with realism and honesty is far better than to hide them in furtive whisperings and perilous ignorance. It is an immense advantage to explore and scrutinise our institutions, our moral codes and even our beliefs, and find out exactly what they are worth and where we stand. Christ is the Light and the Truth—He can stand any amount of examination and experiment. And His Church will be wise to get rid of all its guilty fears, stand up to the facts, and adapt itself to the new conditions of a new age. The greatest sin is to let go, to surrender to complacency and indolence. I do not fear social unrest nearly as much as I dread a dull, feeble acquiescence in things as they are. We can, if we like, build a better world on the basis of fraternalism, co-operation and mutual service.

We ought not to be depressed or frightened by the drive of new forces and the challenging intrusion of new and disturbing ideas. They may have a liberating and invigorating effect on society. In a perfect world there would be little savour left in life. Three months in a standardised, scientific and fool-proof Utopia

would be about enough for most of us. We should be eager to get back to this objectionable world where we can at least make our small contribution to the progress of the race.

But if the world is to be saved from the abyss, we shall need a more robust and venturesome Church. If you look at the new volumes of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" you will see a remarkable little article on "Christianity" by Principal Oman, of Westminster College, Cambridge. And he says this: "All forms of ecclesiastical Christianity are largely concerned with safeguards. But the real challenge of the Cross is the high venture of living in a world not realised. It is this that distinguishes Christianity from all other historical forms of religion. . . . In any case this seems to be the only aspect of it likely to be adequate to the thought and the enterprise of our time." He tells us, in effect, that literary and historical research leads us to conclude that Jesus was the Great Venturer. He was, of course, a courageous reformer and a thoroughgoing rebel—and patriotism naturally killed Him. Now organised religion has not

in recent years shown any very daring venturesomeness. Its aggressiveness seems to have subsided. It has been timid, compromising, cautious—and as the result it has become weak and elderly. It has put too much power into the hands of ecclesiastical leaders who, when an assembly is rent by opposing views, do not call for brave thinking and plain talk, but draw up a meaningless form of words on which both sides can agree. This crippling opportunism has nearly killed our great Free Church Assemblies, and it reminds me of a passage in a glowing speech delivered in Boston by Bishop F. J. McConnell. "During the Boxer rebellion," said the Bishop, "hundreds, probably thousands, of Chinese Christians were martyred. There they knelt, with their heads on the blocks, and the knives trembling in the hands of the executioners. All they needed to do was to grunt out a Chinese word that meant 'I recant' and their lives would be saved. Now, what should I have done under these circumstances? And I speak not simply personally, but in a representative capacity, for I think the rest of you are very much like myself. With my head on a block

I think I should have said, ' Hold on ! I think I can make a statement that will be satisfactory to all sides ! ' "

That wise and able Quaker, Dr. Rufus Jones, tells us that during a very stubborn and unyielding illness he complained to his doctor that he was a long time getting rid of the infection. " The real wonder," said the doctor, " is that such things ever get well. It might be expected that when germs like these get settled into a person's anatomy they would stay there until they had destroyed the body. The remarkable thing is that the healing forces do assert themselves and finally conquer." And Dr. Rufus Jones points out the moral very effectively. Society seems to be smitten with incurable diseases, but, as George Fox used to say, " Life is still atop." History is full of unexpected awakenings, surprising recoveries, revivals of new life. The other day a writer in the *Atlantic Monthly* quoted one of the younger generation as saying: " I'm getting to the end of things I wanted to do. I've done all the things I've been told not to—and they aren't so amusing as they looked. There's a screw loose somewhere."

It has always been the same. The rebels who run riot discover in time that self-indulgence is governed by the law of diminishing returns, and they are thankful to return to a more disciplined life. The Renaissance did not like monogamy very much and made some interesting experiments with freer sex relations, and it found no real or lasting satisfaction in its spurious emancipation. A Catholic modernist has defined religion as "an ultimate optimism founded upon a provisional pessimism." The return to the old sanities and loyalties and simple happinesses of life may come at any time. In the words of Christian to Apollyon, "*I am for going on.*"

THE END

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